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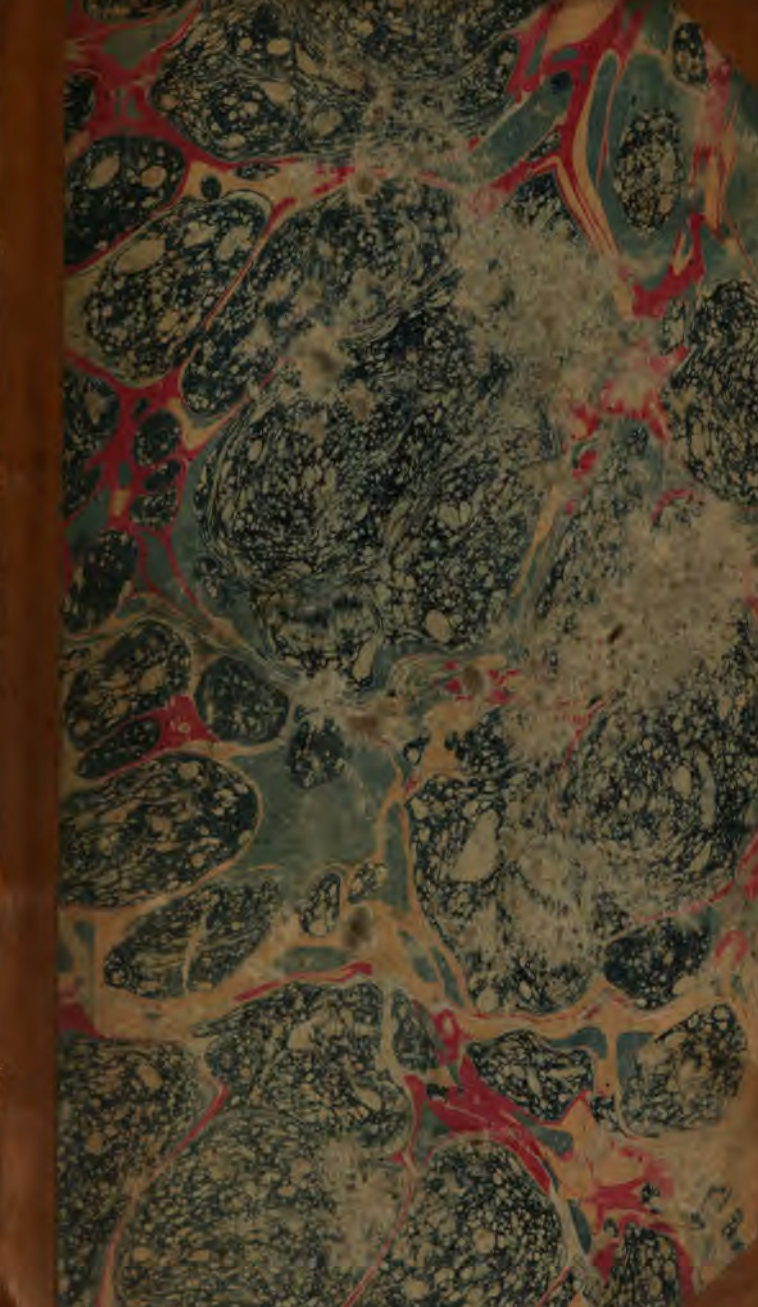
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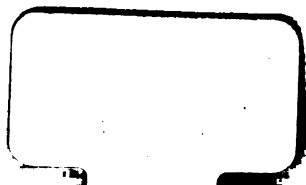
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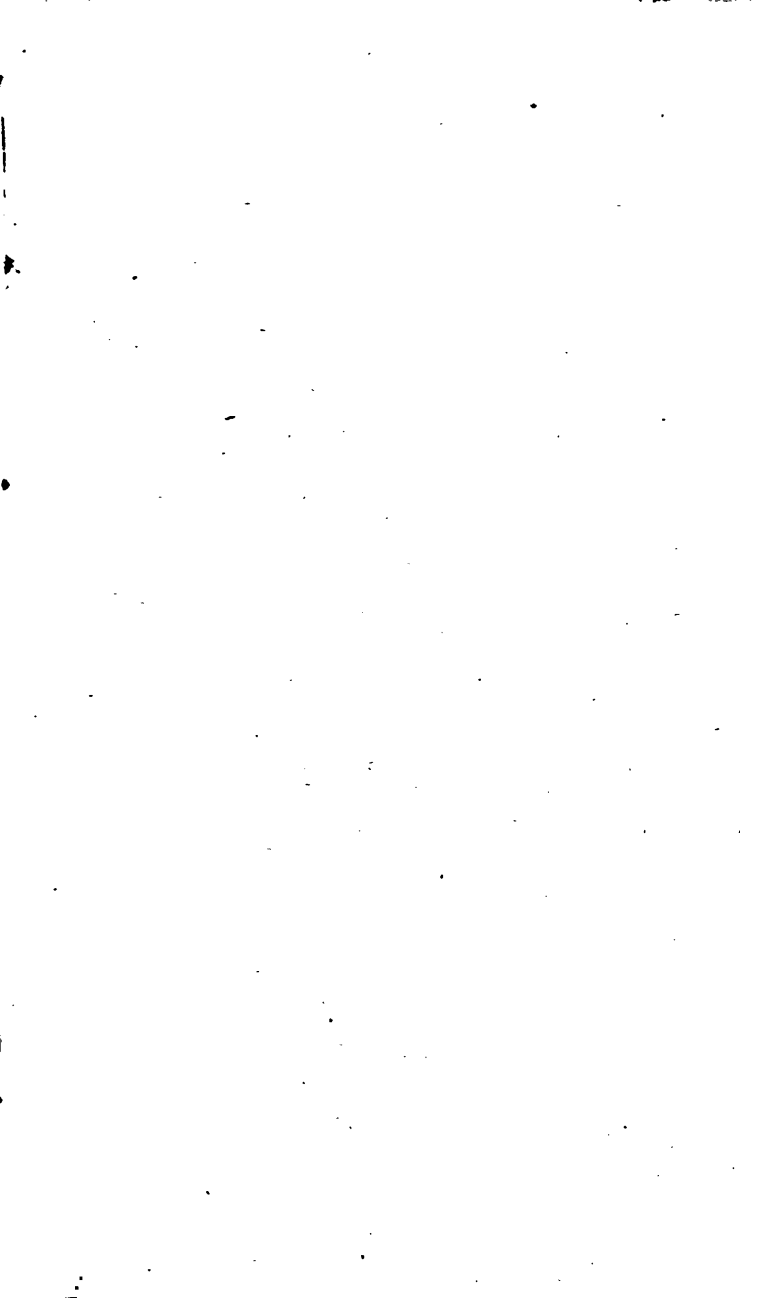
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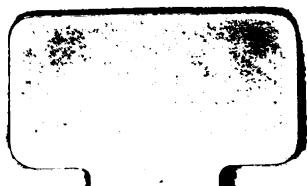


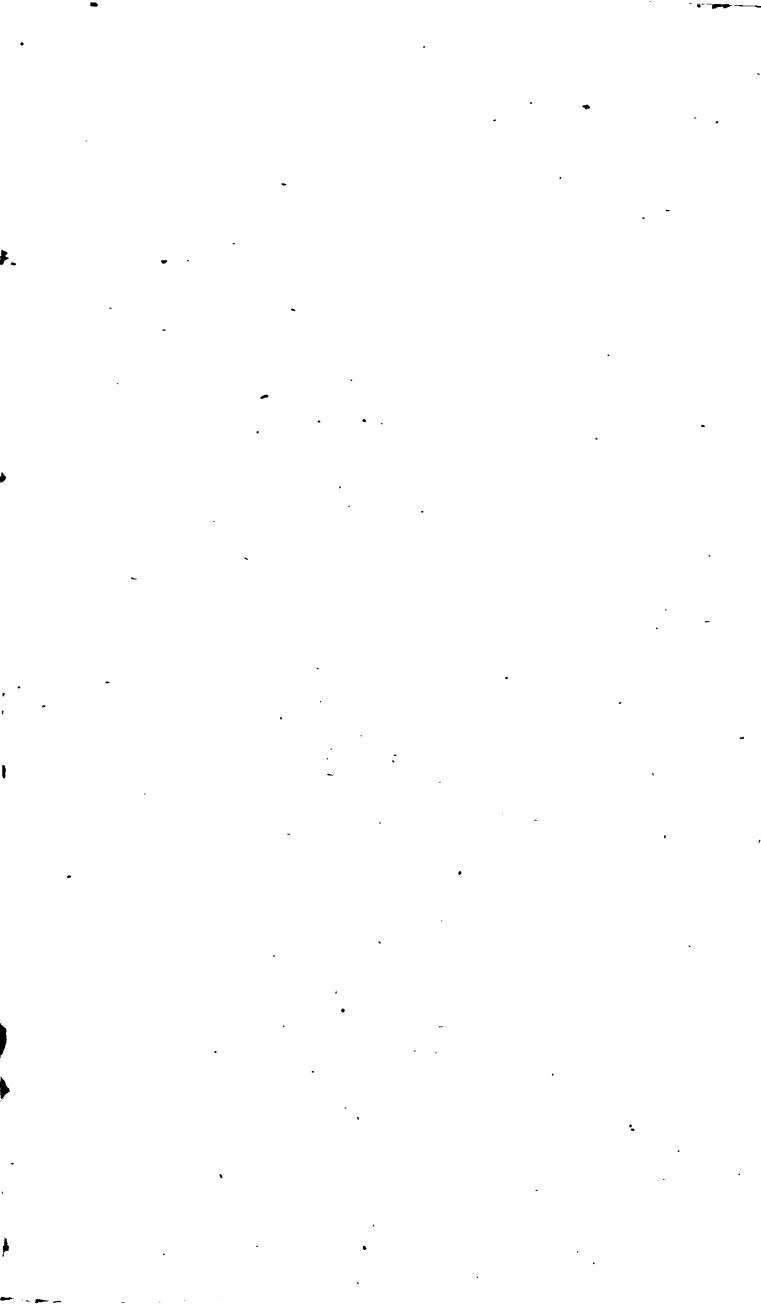
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THE  
**HEIR APPARENT:**  
**A NOVEL.**

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BY THE LATE  
**MRS. GUNNING,**  
Author of *The Delborough Family, Memoirs of Mary, &c.*

REVISED AND AUGMENTED BY HER DAUGHTER,  
**MISS GUNNING.**

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IN THREE VOLUMES.  
VOL. III.

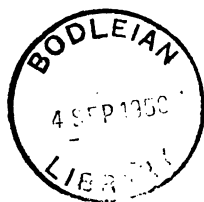
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1802.



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THE

# HEIR APPARENT.

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“AH, think not such a concession would ever be required by his Alicia! I trust he is too well acquainted with the inmost recesses of a heart entirely his own, to conceive it possible my vanity could receive any gratification from a step which could in his own eyes humiliate the man I respect as truly as I love him. If once ascertained of his felicity, though I never

should behold him more, I would endeavour to teach myself the hard lesson of forgetfulness, and receive into my own breast the shadow of peace, from the bright reflection of his happiness." At this moment the young friends were joined by Lady Cecilia and Mr. Doringfield. The pleasure of once more finding herself under the protection of her earliest friend, inspired her with a kind of artificial cheerfulness, which, for the remainder of the evening, enabled her to throw a gleam of that spirit into her conversation, which was naturally one of her most engaging attributes. A flower which has been cruelly nipt from the remaining root will  
thus

thus now and then send forth a feeble shoot, discovering the richness of the soil; and then droop again, the victim of the next chilling blast.

When they parted for the night, Döringfield, with the affection of the tenderest parent, informed her that, on the following day, every circumstance of her birth should be explained, for he could now restore her to the rank and fortune her parents had held. As she closed the door of the supper-room, she heard him say to Lady Cecilia, "Is it not, madam, a most singular interposition of the divine power, which permits the orphan Alicia, under this roof, to receive protection, and here to

learn the particulars of that sad history, which will explain so circumstantially the arcana of Lady Ormington's duplicity?"

And now, if my readers will permit, we will leave our heroine beneath the shelter of her inestimable friends at Heathside, and, to save Mr. Doringfield the trouble and pain of entering into the distressing circumstances, revert to occurrences which had taken place several years prior to the commencement of this simple narrative. At that time Bellevue Castle was the residence of the Duke of Malvern, father to the present Countess of Ormington, then Lady Mary Dalton,

and of the Marquis of Desmond, who was fifteen years younger than his sister. The Duchess had lost several infant children during the intermediate space, and all hopes of a male heir to that illustrious house had been long since given up, when, to the unexpected delight of the Duke, her Grace again gave reason for the revival of expectations, often so cruelly blighted. But, alas ! that moment to which the fond husband had looked forward for the fulfilment of his most anxious hopes, deprived him of the wife he loved with as much tenderness as the easy serenity of his character could admit of. When the infant Marquis was presented to his arms, he almost



forgot how dear a price had been paid for the precious babe, so long, so ardently desired, as the only prop of honours which, without this welcome little stranger, would have been extinct at the decease of his Grace, there being no male heir to the dukedom. A barony, in the meanwhile, had been secured in the female line; and, until this period, Lady Mary had been considered as the sole heiress of the princely fortune his Grace enjoyed, and as the future Baroness of Heartfield. Even at the early age of fifteen, ambition swallowed up every other affection; and very ill did her little Ladyship brook so powerful a rival to the regard and honours of the Duke. The  
 smiling

smiling little Marquis, even in his birth, appeared to be an object at which misfortune levelled all her shafts; and, unconscious of his loss, the lovely boy was baptized over the splendid coffin which held the pale remains of her, who, in giving existence to him, had resigned her own.

For some years the education of the young Marquis occupied the whole attention of the Duke; who was assisted in the pleasing task by that worthy and respectable Doringfield, who, at the commencement of these pages, was presented to the notice of my readers as Rector of Ashbourn, and the avowed protector of Alicia

Arundel. Nor could the young heir have been blessed with a more enlightened preceptor ; or a preceptor possess a pupil more persevering in the paths of science, and in whose sensible and intelligent mind the soft and clear season of infancy denoted the more brilliant and splendid noon of life.

About two miles from the Castle, peeping through the embowering woods with which it was surrounded, arose the elegant mansion of Mr. Fortescue. One only daughter had blessed his union ; and in her dawning virtues those of her inestimable mother again appeared, to crown the

the father's hope at beholding his only child, the heiress of his large domains, more celebrated for the graces of her mind and person, than for the wealth she must one day inherit.

The two families, which Providence itself seemed to have united by the silken cords of friendship, had lived for many years in habits of the strictest intimacy; and, even in childhood, the youthful descendents evidently manifested, that, in their innocent hearts, the seeds of reciprocal affection were thus early sown. No circumstance appeared that could cloud the bright perspective of a golden

den harvest; and each family gave way to the pleasing hope of one day seeing those beloved children united by the most endearing of all ties, to hearts formed for rational and domestic felicity. His Grace thought of this alliance with much satisfaction; for the most avaricious parent could not have sought out a more advantageous connection than that which presented itself in the young and lovely heiress of Heathside.

Under the amiable and highly accomplished Doringfield, the little Marquis made a rapid progress in the various branches of education  
befitting

befitting the exalted rank he was born to support, and no task was thought too difficult by his persevering Lordship, if his indulging tutor held out as the reward for its attainment a visit to Heathside, or a walk with the pretty Rosanna.

As he advanced in years, she was the torch which illuminated his first path of life; tracing out to his dazzled sight the enchanting road to which hope led him.

When separated from her, he was restless and uneasy; indeed he saw but her, he thought of no other object; and, when absent, the soft and silver tones of her melodious voice still vibrated to his heart. He

had now completed his fourteenth year, and Lady Mary still remained unmarried, the darling of her father's heart. Since the death of the Duchess her Ladyship had been the uncontrolled mistress of the Duke's house : many offers had been proposed, all of which her Ladyship had rejected ; and by many it was imagined, the entire dominion she possessed over his Grace, and all which belonged to him, would prevent her from resigning the power she loved so well into the hands of a husband, whom it was more than probable she might not find so complying to her will as the passive Duke, over whose mind she had acquired an exclusive right

right to reign. At thirty, she retained the first brilliancy of youth ; to which charms was added a figure which must obtain admiration, and which, with an air of haughty triumph, seemed to demand universal homage. She had received, from infancy, constant adulation in the house of her indulgent parent ; who, from the moment he had lost his Duchess, regarded her as his sole companion ; for the infant Marquis, after the first novelty had subsided, became only secondary in the affections of his father to that sister, who had neither the wish nor the ability to discharge the important duties to which she was called. She attended



ded to none but those which were most conducive to her own interested views: for, under the most seducing exterior, was concealed a heart depraved by unbounded ambition. Habituated to assume whatever line of conduct she thought most beneficial to herself, the soft gentleness of her manners was but artifice,—her sensibility but hypocrisy, whose aim it was to blind all those who beheld her, by the fascination of her enchanting spells. Self-sufficient, vain, and envious, she would at times appear affectionate, modest, and without pretensions. By the Duke she was adored; and, to judge by the words and caresses with, which

which she overwhelmed him, one would have supposed her the very pattern of filial piety. Her accomplished and interesting brother seemed the second object of her affections; though, at the same time, from her heart she detested him; — a sentiment which her soul had harboured from the moment his birth had ended her flattering dreams of ambition. For the lovely Rosanna Fortescue she had long entertained the greatest possible aversion; the uncommon beauty of whose face, and figure, as she grew up in all the charms of unrivalled loveliness and elegant accomplishments, had excited her jealousy,

and

and rendered her odious to her sight: yet, with these sentiments, did she uniformly express, towards the gentle unassuming girl, all the tenderness of romantic and unbounded friendship, and appeared to wait with impatience for the destined time, which, she said, was to give her a sister in the chosen friend of her heart. The innocent Rosanna believed that all her numberless and warm professions were the genuine dictates of the most refined sensibility, and returned them with sincerity and interest. Mrs. Fortescue was blessed in the possession of the most refined understanding, mel-  
lowed by the tenderest affections,  
which

which were visible in every action of her exalted mind. Constant ill health gave to her beautiful face a tinge of melancholy ; while a profound insight into the inmost recesses of the human heart, and a decided taste for observation, lent to her physiognomy a decided grandeur of expression, which, had it not been united to the most calm serenity of manners, might to superficial observers have been mistaken for hauteur. With the generality of the world she had little intercourse ; having for some years withdrawn herself from circles in which she was born to shine : both inclination and constitution had induced her to quit them  
for

for ever. Yet to those friends her heart and discernment pointed out as worthy, the distinction was, she lavished on them the most kind and tender attention. She was the most faithful of wives, the tenderest of mothers, and she fulfilled with zeal, but without ostentation, the separate duties those ties demanded. The most disinterested affection had been the bond of her union with her amiable husband; and for a length of happy years, unmarked by the finger of misfortune, that tenderness had been reciprocal; for never, while life remained, was the delightful spell dissolved. It is natural to suppose that, endowed with  
the

the clear and discriminating eye of true understanding, the enlightened mind of Mrs. Fortescue could not but discover the true character of Lady Mary. It is indeed true that the winning sweetness and affection, always visible in the conduct of her Ladyship, had not altogether blinded her to those imperfections, which would sometimes peep through the thick veil of disguise in which she was constantly enveloped ; but to the mind itself truly virtuous, it is impossible at all times to wear the face of reserve, or suffer the rust of mistrust to hang about the heart ; and often did the candid mind of Mrs. Fortescue blame herself for harbour-

ing

ing suspicions injurious to her Ladyship's sincerity. The complaint under which she had long been gradually declining, now made rapid progress on her delicate frame ; but, too firm to grieve those about her with a knowledge of her own feelings, she suffered disease to rankle on her ; and as a plant contracts and withers in its bloom, when winter fastens on its tender leaves, so did pain and languor waste her frame till she became the shadow of her former self. Accustomed to the delicate constitution of his beloved wife, Mr. Fortescue viewed her emaciated person through the optic most favourable to his own wishes ;

and

and was far from thinking he was on the point of being deprived of her who had constituted all his earthly felicity. He was a man who did honour to the noble ancestors from whence he sprang. A tender husband, an indulgent father, he fulfilled each duty allotted him with integrity and honour. By a commanding air of dignity he appeared to challenge awe, had not the polite frankness of his address inspired an esteem which, on a more intimate knowledge, was converted into the most solid and lasting friendship.

Such were the parents of Miss Fortescue ; and with them the Duke of Malvern had already settled the  
union



union of the Marquis ; which, when it had been arranged, was to take place when his Lordship should have completed his twentieth year ; the families having agreed in thinking the accomplishment of such an event would preclude the necessity of Lord Desmond's making the grand tour ; rightly judging a connection in which the heart is warmly engaged to be the most powerful of all preservatives against the destructive dissipation so madly plunged into by our young men of fashion, which too often terminates in the destruction of their health, their morals, and that fortune which, even before they are actually in possession

possession of it, is pledged for temporary supplies to be squandered at the gaming-table; and they are themselves reduced to the mortifying necessity of seeing their carriages and horses seized to pay the interest of debts incurred through folly, and squandered without reflection.

Not of this description of fashionable young men was the amiable and accomplished Marquis of Desmond; who, inseparable from his beloved and destined wife, enjoyed with rapture their present felicity, nor thought of clouds which might arise to overshadow their future happiness. Thus had delight administered a delicious opiate to their enraptured senses,

senses, and its effect hushed all foreboding,—every sympathetic intelligence which the soul of sensibility so usually receives, ere a pelting pitiless storm burst on the head, unprepared by previous joy for future misery. With rapidity did Lord Desmond follow the studies allotted by Mr. Doringfield, that nothing might impede his daily visits at Heathside, where, accompanied by his tutor and Miss Archer, the orphan daughter of a deceased friend of Mrs. Fortescue's, the young and happy party, with that gentle gaiety inseparable from innocence, would amuse the hours which flew on the wings of love and joy.

It

It was at this period that Lady Mary accepted the hand of Lord Ormington, who, shortly after his nuptials had been solemnized, was appointed ambassador from our court to that of Madrid ; and as the Duke's health appeared to have been for some time declining, the Countess availed herself of that excuse, to solicit permission of remaining at Bellevue during her Lord's absence. And as she had ever possessed the power of making the will of others subservient to her own, she succeeded in her wish ; and still remained as much the acknowledged mistress of her father's house, as if she had not been transplanted into any other family.

The last winter had been marked by the marriage of her Ladyship, and the presentation of Lord Desmond into the circles of the world. Nor did the declared engagement of his hand prevent many of the most fashionable women about town from seeking to gain the distinction of his notice ; but still his first affections were firmly riveted on the companion of his childhood, the friend of his more matured reason, and the promised, the adored bride, whose vows were shortly to be plighted to him at the altar. Preparations were already begun for the projected marriage ; and it was the increasing illness of her mother which alone had prevented the lovely heiress from

from having been presented at court previously to her union with the Marquis. The accumulated illness of many years at length overcame the remaining strength of this truly excellent woman, whose constitution, no longer able to contend, gave way to the most alarming symptoms, which now baffled every attempt to stop their progress; and that crisis fast approached, that threatened to her family a fatal, to herself a happy, termination to all her sufferings.

The almost heart-broken Rosanna never for a moment quitted her; and one day, when she was endeavouring

vouring to appear cheerful, and had dwelt with pleasure on the days of future happiness which presented themselves to their view, when she should have become the wife of her amiable lover, the already almost fainted mother tenderly pressed the fair hand of her beloved Rosanna.

“ I had hoped, my dearest girl, to have witnessed your union with him, who is scarcely less dear to me than yourself. For I am well, convinced that he will watch over your gentle nature with affection like my own; but my ardent prayer, I daily grow more sensible, has been rejected, and I shall die without having resigned you  
to

to the arms of Lord Desmond, who will love you, I doubt not, with fidelity and truth."

Rosanna, nearly stifled by her emotions, kissed the pale hands of her beloved mother. An ashy paleness overspread her face, and some words rendered unintelligible by her sobs expired on her colourless lips. The entrance of her destined husband could alone have restored her to recollection, which Mrs. Fortescue could not support without feeling the most afflicting pangs, at the heart-rending sorrow of her child, and requested that she would for a few minutes retire, and leave her

C 3

with



with the Marquis, to whose care she in the most solemn manner recommended her agonized Rosanna ; and requested that nothing might delay a ceremony on the completion of which the mutual happiness of both depended. " For you, my dear Lord," she added, " are the only husband her heart would ever elect ; and mine is at this moment relieved from the agonies of separation, by the soothing hope that two beings so loved will spend their life together."

The Marquis, with the affectionate duty of a son, vowed to execute even the most trifling of her wishes ; and  
was

was yet speaking of his adored Rosanna, when he perceived that the interesting woman, whose voice yet thrilled on his ear, had, without a sigh, resigned her pure soul to that God, in worshipping, adoring, and serving whom she had passed her days, there to intercede at the throne of Omnipotence for those she had so dearly loved on earth ; and when the changed countenance of the now beatified Mrs. Fortescue had announced the completion of that alteration which mortality must suffer, whether adorned with honour, rank, and riches, or debased by the contumely of a world, in which the most exalted often find the barbed arrows of slander and malevolence. His

heart bursting with sorrow, and his face bathed in tears, he quitted the chamber of silent death, and, in the soothing accents of the tenderest love, imparted to his hapless Rosanna, that she had on earth no longer a mother, but in heaven had gained an angel whose protecting spirit would hover round and teach her, that resignation to the will of the Almighty is the only certain way to acquire calmness under the heaviest of all calamities, and in time to acquire that peace which the world cannot give. But let us draw a curtain over those heart-rending scenes.

When the husband and the  
daughter

daughter were informed of the irreparable loss they had sustained, the sorrow of Rosanna was without violence; but it wasted her hours in silent grief, and every gleam of soft gaiety which had played on her lovely face, seemed dead in her heart for ever: on her fair cheek, the vermeil tint of health was succeeded by a deadly paleness; and sleep and appetite having forsaken her, her strength was sinking for want of their aid. The real child of simplicity and nature, she mourned unceasingly by its genuine dictates: even the soothing of the Marquis, and her beloved father, failed to check the silent tear.

Needless and intrusive is it by argument to labour at impeding the current of affliction; every heart bursting with sorrow must have felt how much more efficacious are a few words whispered by sympathy to the ear of distress, than the moral arguments of the high-pitched persuasions of stoical unimpressive language, and cool philosophy. The soul is awakened to something resembling pleasure, on finding commiseration from those whom we love; and the tender interest which they take in our sorrows, will, though slowly, yet certainly succeed, in preserving the drooping plant.

One morning when Lord Desmond had found her bathed in tears, he cried, pressing her to his affectionate heart, " Is it thus, my love, that I am ever to meet you a prey to silent woe ? Ah, in mercy to me, strive to conquer those sensations, which threaten my peace in the destruction of your own ! Often have I passed unobserved the traces of that misery which is so deeply painted on that lovely face, that till now ever smiled in all the irradiated brilliancy of sunshine on your Desmond ; and alone blessed with such a treasure, and possessing nothing more, I should feel rich beyond comparison. I believe that misery will

not in all moods bear even a glance ; and from this conviction have I observed silence, when the starting tear announced the heart-felt grief of my sorrowing love, fearing by misapplied zeal to wring down oceans more : but fain would I cheat it of its present bitterness, and then, by watching the seasonable moment, hope to pour the balm of comfort, and speak of future happiness and the years of uninterrupted bliss which we may yet enjoy together."

Rosanna heaved a deep sigh as she softly pressed the hand which clasped her own, and in broken accents assured him that the sweet  
 hope

hope of one day living for him alone, was the only consolation that she could now receive. " Yet I know not," continued she, while pearly drops stole over her lovely face, " but I feel a foreboding terror at my heart, inconceivable to myself, which makes me fear that I am about to become the victim of superstitious terrors; and if, to the loss that I have already sustained, I should live to add the decrease of your affections, surely this already oppressed heart would burst the moment I learned my fate."

The Marquis conjured her to banish ideas so detrimental to their  
hopes,



hopes, and to remember that a few months would unite them for ever. "Calm then, my love," he continued, "that exquisite sensibility of soul, and cease to shade our future bliss by terrors which are the offspring of a mind weakened by distress."

There are those, who at all times have the power to cheat us of our cares, and who can win upon us in all humours. Thus it was with Miss Fortescue, when her soft full eyes were raised to the manly countenance of the amiable Desmond. After some months, her bosom began again to glow with the delights of sociability, and her sorrow was mellowed into  
composed

composed serenity. When her looks rested on her destined husband, they clearly bespoke that their errand was that of tenderness, and all their language softened pleasure, which eloquently told him that he alone could impart happiness, life, and comfort, to her fascinated heart.

The Duke of Malvern had fixed with Mr. Fortescue the settlements proposed to be made on the young and lovely pair. The fortune of Rofanna was vast, and the preparations making, conducted in a style of splendour befitting the rank and expectations of the parties: and now that the due time of mourning for  
Mrs.

Mrs. Fortescue was elapfed, it was propofed that the ceremony fhould take place at the Caftle; after which the Marquis and his fair bride, accompanied by his Grace and Lady Ormington, were to pafs the remainder of the winter in London.

Mr. Doringfield ftill continued to refide at Bellevue, though his poft for the laft two years had been changed; and he was no longer regarded in the light of governor to Lord Defmond, but as domeftic chaplain to his Grace. From the conftant intercourse fubfifting between the two families, this refpectable man had often occafions of difcovering

covering the virtues and the graces which adorned Fanny Archer, who, though some years older than Miss Fortescue, had ever been regarded by her rather as a sister than the dependent of her father's bounty. Fanny was the younger branch of a well descended family; but good blood, unaccompanied by the gifts of fortune, was all that her father had to boast; and, fortunately for his family, Mr. Fortescue and himself had contracted a friendship for each other at Westminster school, which, during life, had afforded to himself the most essential benefits, and at his decease secured an honourable and happy asylum for his orphan

orphan girl in Mr. Fortescue's family, where she was ever distinguished by the tender affection to which her unobtrusive virtues most justly intitled her.

Doringfield saw the superiority of understanding and the extreme sweetness of disposition which she so eminently possessed; and the connection having received the entire approbation of all parties, the marriage was soon solemnized. From the hands of her liberal benefactor Doringfield received his amiable Fanny, and a fortune of two thousand pounds, which Mr. Fortescue presented to the fair bride on the morning

ing of their marriage ; and it was agreed that Mrs. Doringfield should continue to reside at Heathside till Rosanna became Marchioness of Desmond.

All now was joy at the Castle ; Lady Ormington had presented her Lord with a son and heir ; and as soon as the wedding of her brother was over, she proposed establishing herself in the Earl's town house. As the Duke could not support a separation from both his children, it was also determined the Marquis and his lovely wife should reside with his Grace, a special licence having been procured by the Duke,  
and

and placed in the hands of Doringfield, who was to perform the ceremony.

On the morning prior to that day on which they were to be united, Lord Desmond and his Rosanna were rambling in the beautiful grounds of Heathside, giving way to all the transports of approved affection. It was late in the autumn, yet the very air seemed in unison with the youthful lovers; and the soft breathing of the wind exhaled a thousand perfumes from the fragrant shrubs and flowers, which yet lingered as if unwilling to give place to the stern and rapid approach of winter.

ter. The delight of the Marquis was visible in his fine and intelligent features; nor was that of Rosanna less heart-felt, though mellowed by thoughts which made her seem even more than usually pensive, when she recollected the awful change that a few short hours would make in her situation.

Her delighted father had that morning been in more than his usual spirits, and had left her after breakfast to go to Derby on some business relative to the succeeding day.

“ And now, my own Rosanna,”  
cried



cried the happy lover, " you are almost my wife ; what then is become of all the dark forebodings with which you once harrowed up my soul ? For now I think nothing human can have power to snatch you from him who lives but to constitute your felicity." " And I," exclaimed the destined bride, " will cherish that rich, sweet blessing, that gem whose possession excites virtue, fortifies it against temptation in every distressful hour, and, with divine sensations, can furnish us with energy to bear up against every storm of life,—the reciprocal confidence in each other's fidelity, which no earthly power can ever shake;  
and

and indeed I feel how wrong I have been, in giving way to such melancholy thoughts, when I remember that the heart which is clothed in innocence should not easily resign itself to despair, while there is a gleam of hope to lead us on; and that in refusing its blessed influence, we give up the most bountiful of all blessings, which scatters the roses of comfort over every dreary scene of humanity."

Desmond in silence pressed the sweet philosopher to his heart, then softly whispered, "To-morrow, dearest, most idolized of beings, makes you my own for ever."

During

During the period in which they had been thus sweetly occupied, to their mind's content, forgetting that the universe contained others less happy than themselves, the windings of the shrubbery had brought them near the house, from which there appeared to issue sounds of confusion and distress. Rosanna, terrified she knew not why, put one hand over her eyes, while with the other she firmly grasped the arm of Lord Desmond; but as he approached nearer the hall door, the noise appeared to increase, and she sprang from that support, on which she could have met even death without apprehension, so that it had not separated her from him she loved.

In the walk leading to the house they beheld Mrs. Doringfield, as if in pursuit of some one, whom they doubted not to be themselves; and as she approached, the pallid hue of her face, and the tears which chased each other down her cheeks, filled them with alarm. Conviction of the fatal truth, like lightning, flashed on the mind of Rosanna, and she screamed in frantic agony, " My father ! In the name of God, what terrible catastrophe has befallen my beloved father ? " Mrs. Doringfield replied, " Be calm, my dearest Miss Fortescue. Would I could have been spared from the communication of the dreadful intelligence ! But pro-

ceed not till you learn that which would annihilate both yourself and the Marquis, should the stroke arrive unsoftened by preparation."

Overcome with horror, Rosanna made a pause. Desmond in his arms, supported her trembling frame, and Mrs. Doringfield proceeded in a voice rendered inarticulate by grief: "Heaven has yet in store for you a heart-rending lesson of resignation to his Divine will, which his Almighty goodness will alone teach you to support with the patience due from the creature to the Creator. Your father, you know, went out on horseback. He has been  
4                      thrown."

thrown.”—“ And is there then no hope?” exclaimed she in accents of horror. “ Must I also lose my beloved father?”—“ My dearest friend, you must exert resolution to support the worst. Before I quitted the house, the surgeon had pronounced that he had but a few short moments to live : his voice had failed, and the cold hand of death had stamped him with its seal.”

• Rosanna was now insensible to all her sorrows, and appeared to have flown to the mansions of the blest, there to join her beloved parents ; and in this situation she was conveyed to her own apartment, where

the soft attentions of Lord Desmond first restored her to a sense of the loss she had sustained. . But it was not till after the last sad ceremonies had been performed to her unfortunate father, that recollection returned to his miserable orphan.

The Duke and Lady Ormington immediately removed to Heathside, intending to remain there till the afflicted heiress could be removed from her own house to the Castle. His Grace had been appointed sole guardian, both to her person and fortune, by a will executed many years prior to the fatal accident which terminated her father's existence ;

ence ; and he really felt the affection of a parent for her, whom his Grace already considered as the bride of his son.

The Marquis never left her bedside till reason returned ; and the first words she uttered were “ Desmond, my own Lord ! ” He had been afflicted beyond measure at witnessing the ravages sorrow had made on the countenance of his beloved ; but the sound of her soft voice was a consolation, as it caught his ear, and seemed like a stream of comfort flowing to his soul as she first whispered his name ; and folding her fondly to his heart he mixed his tears with hers.



“ We ought, my love,” said the soothing participator of her agonized feelings, “ to support this stroke with patient resignation, nay, even to rejoice at that celestial transformation that envelops worldly sorrow, and shuts out pain and anxiety for ever. But, in grief, the better sense is absorbed by a fund of selfish regret, which leads us to lament what we ourselves suffer, without considering that the Almighty dispenses this affliction to us, that the perfect felicity of those we love may be completed. Let us then, my gentle Rosanna, shake off those melancholy tints of Nature’s weakness, and suffer me to dry away the tear of filial regret.”

Can

Can it be supposed that the arguments of a comforter so beloved pleaded in vain to the heart of a fair mourner? or that he had not the power to wipe off sorrow's sickly tear? To you who have known affection's tender, anxious, yet ecstatic throbs I appeal. You who have experienced death's iron hand lay low the beloved parent, or the tender friend, were you, even at its most bitter moment, rendered callous to the soothing accents of sympathy, proceeding from that heart united to your own by those cords the tearing asunder of which would break your own? And could you be insensible of the calm felicity of feeling you

had yet ties for which you wished to live ?

The Countess of Ormington attended the interesting invalid with all the appearance of sisterly affection, and by such conduct secured the gratitude of the Marquis, who lived but in the presence of his Rossanna. As soon as her health would permit, she was removed to Bellevue, as the Duke thought it more advisable than to continue the expensive establishment at Heathside during the minority of the heiress. This arrangement was equally agreeable to all parties, who wished for nothing so much as the uninterrupted

interrupted society of each other; and the family put off their journey to town, out of respect to the memory of Mr. Fortescue, whose recent death must prevent his daughter from mixing in the gay scenes of the world.

During the dismal months of winter, whose days of mourning so well accorded with the harassed spirits of Rosanna and him who shared in all her sorrows, each object that presented itself brought the melancholy remembrance of those beloved beings, who during the last had enlivened the domestic circle by all the charms of polished sense and en-

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dearing affection. The Duke had been for some time much occupied by the settlement of his intended daughter-in-law's affairs ; and he often received large packets from town, avowedly concerning them ; but the contents of which were kept a profound secret from all but Lady Ormington.

March was now arrived, and Lord Desmond observed with surprise that his father had ceased to speak, as had ever been his custom to do, of that time when he should receive the hand of his promised bride. One day he followed the Duke to his library, where he told  
his

his Grace, as the first mourning for Mr. Fortescue was over, he hoped nothing would now retard his immediate union with Rosanna. "My dear William," said the Duke, "I have for some time wished for an opportunity of speaking to you on this subject. It will, I trust, be needless for me to tell you, how anxious I have ever been to call Miss Fortescue my daughter: but, since the death of my poor friend, some unforeseen obstacles have arisen, which, till they are finally settled, must prevent the marriage from taking place; as a very considerable part of Rosanna's fortune is about to be disputed by a distant branch in

the male line of her father's family, and the claim appears so well founded as to give my counsel reason to suppose a court of chancery can alone settle the dispute. I have delayed to mention this unpleasant intelligence, either to her or you, in the hope that matters might yet be accommodated; but it can now no longer be concealed, as proceedings are already instituted by Major Fortescue to recover the estates of his late relation. The personal fortune she is intitled to is not disputed; and at all events that, which in itself is very considerable, would make her alliance desirable to most families, independent of her own merit, which

which I assure you is fully valued by me. But till this matter is decided I must postpone the ceremony from taking place, as I do not choose to involve my family in law ; to which I have ever had an invincible and decided objection."

It was with extreme sorrow and consternation the Marquis received this blow to his sanguine hopes ; and in the tenderest tones his Rosanna was made the repository of his grief ; and as they both well knew no remonstrance would alter the Duke's decision, they resolved to wait the moment appointed with patient resignation ; and as, in almost every



every situation of human life, there are, to those inclined to seek for it, some events from which they may derive satisfaction, they solaced themselves with knowing that, till that day which would unite them, they should continue to live under the same roof, and be blessed in the society of each other.

During the recital, so cruel to both, the varying colour of Rosanna evinced the effects it had on her heart; but too delicate to blame the conduct of the Duke, she only regretted to his son her fears of being less acceptable to his Grace, should this unfortunate law-suit be  
given

given against her. " By you, my dear Lord, I know I should be equally beloved, even if this hand, and a heart entirely your own, were to be my only possessions; nor should I feel any reluctance at owing every thing to the generosity of him to whom I shall be indebted for that which wealth could never bestow."

Protestations of his disinterested affection, while in his presence, gave ease to her heart; but when she had retired for the night, and was left to her own reflections, she gave way without restraint to the feelings this unlooked-for information had occasioned. Sorrow oppressed her heart,

heart, as she reflected on the conversation of the Duke and Lord Desmond.

The embarrassment of her affairs was the plea made use of to defer their marriage. Could it be possible that it was only a pretence to gain time, or perhaps for ever to destroy those hopes, so long, so fondly cherished? At this torturing surmise, she sunk on her knees, and invoked the spirits of her fainting parents to intercede at the throne of heaven, that she might not be robbed of him in whom her affections centred. Her mind was now calmed of its agitation, and she waited the morning with

with impatience, which would again bring her consolation in the society of the beloved friend of her heart.

On descending to the breakfast-room, she saw the Duke already there, and prepared to salute him, as was her usual custom, with a filial regard she had ever entertained for the father of her destined Lord. The usually placid face of his Grace bore the visible traces of uneasiness; and, as he kissed her cheek, he affectionately took her hand, saying, "I was coming in pursuit of you, my dear; but have you seen my son this morning?"

"No,

“ No, my Lord,” replied the agitated girl : “ and I am surprised he is so late, as I have been strolling in the Park this hour ; and this is, I think, the first time he has omitted to seek me for his morning walk. But I hope,” she added in a timid voice, “ Lord Desmond is well ; for your countenance, my dear Duke, would almost tempt me to think the contrary. ”

“ He was perfectly so a quarter of an hour since, for he has been engaged with me ; which must plead his excuse for neglecting his appointment with the fair Lady, from whom I flatter myself he will

will learn obedience to my will, and fortitude to support what cannot be averted. But come, my dear, let us have our breakfast; after which you and I will have a little conversation in the library."

With an oppressed heart and trembling fingers, she prepared to obey his Grace's orders; but before she had leisure to pursue the inquiries which hung on her lips, Lady Ormington entered; and when breakfast was nearly ended they were joined by the Marquis, who, instead of hastening to the chair always left for him next to that Miss Fortescue

Fortescue filled, as it had ever been his custom to do after the shortest separation, he scarcely noticed one of the party ; but, as if totally unconscious of any thing, he went to the window, against which he leaned his face, hid by his hand, and seemingly buried in thought.

“ Have you taken your breakfast, my Lord ? ” said the attentive Rosanna. Her voice alone had the power to rouse him from the reverie into which he had fallen ; and he placed himself in the vacant chair next the trembling victim, who in silence presented him

him his tea, while the pearly drop of suspense trickled from her mild eye.

The Duke looked angry, and said, "Indeed, Desmond, the ill grace with which you prepare to obey me is not the kind of conduct I had expected from my son." His Lordship did not reply, but seemed fullen and uneasy.

Lady Ormington observing the distress of both, with an air of well-dissembled kindness took the hand of Miss Fortescue, saying, "You are without doubt astonished, my love, at the very extraordinary conduct of  
of



of my brother, who I see has not yet summoned courage sufficient to make you the confident of his distress. Neither has our dear father, who loves you so tenderly, resolution enough to say, because he fears that his determination will give you pain, that it is his intention William should make a short tour on the continent, before that period can arrive when I shall embrace my dearest friend as the wife of my brother, and the sister of my choice; and during the time he is on his travels you will continue to reside with the Duke and myself, who will by every endeavour strive to

to lessen the unavoidable pangs of separation."

"His travels!" repeated the almost convulsed auditor. "Gracious Heaven! you will not surely, my dear Duke, command him to obey these cruel orders!" A glance from the almost stupefied Desmond confirmed her fears, and prevented her proceeding; the half-uttered sentence died on her pale lips, her eyes rested on the table, and she remained nearly without sensation.

"I am sorry, my dear," said his Grace, visibly agitated as he spoke, "that the adjustment of your affairs  
has

has made it necessary for the marriage to be deferred ; and during that time I have fixed on my son's travelling. Every step is arranged for his departure ; and as I will not now recede, I request you to believe my motives are wise and discreet, and, I really think, for the happiness both of the Marquis and yourself. So be composed, my love," tenderly kissing her as he spoke, "and let the future Marchioness of Desmond convince her Lord, she is more capable of supporting a short separation than he, who is one day to become her protector, and who on this occasion, I am sorry to see, evinces such puerile weakness."

The

The till now inanimate Marquis had risen from his seat, and approached his father, by an eloquent but silent look expressing his gratitude for the tenderness he had shown his beloved. He seized the hands of both, and pressed them alternately to his lips and heart ; then throwing himself on a chair, he appeared to wait some further information from the Duke, who, still holding the hand of Miss Fortescue, continued : “ It is useless, my dear children, for me to recapitulate those reasons which have made me determine on my present plan. As I doubt not you are already informed of the conversation which last took

place between Desmond and myself respecting the very unpleasant claim, made by a distant relation of your family, on a very considerable part of the property left by my late much esteemed friend, which I doubt not will in the end be settled to our wish, though it may yet be some time before so desirable an event can be obtained ; and as it will be an advantage to my son to visit some of the foreign courts, I cannot fix on a more proper time than the present for him to make the grand tour ; and I have taken care to provide, as his companion and fellow traveller, a gentleman who is in all respects most eligible for the undertaking ;

dertaking; as it could not be supposed our good friend Doringfield would for so many months consent to leave his amiable Fanny. Can you be surprised at my having shown signs of discontent, at beholding the visible reluctance my son discovers at obeying those wishes which can only have his future comfort in view ? ”

Rosanna, pale, her eyes bent on the carpet, her voice inarticulate by the stifled emotions of her soul, kept a profound silence. An ardent kiss, imprinted on the hand held by the object of her earliest affections, roused her almost dormant faculties.

She fixed on him a look, in which he could read the sickening struggles she laboured with, as she revolved over the cruel fate which forced them to separate. Then, turning to the Duke, she softly cried, " Since it is your will, my Lord, I must comply, and for a time resign the society of my earliest friend—a sacrifice, I must candidly confess, which will be an affliction of the deepest nature : but I trust and hope that the Almighty will grant me resignation to support so great a loss ; and that your Grace will not have reason to complain, that it is my want of fortitude which weakens the resolution of your son."

" O my

“ O my heart’s treasure,” cried the amiable Marquis, fondly clasping her in his arms, “ can my father be surpris’d at my repugnance to quit you ? I go, since it is so determin’d : but believe it is the only wish of my soul, in which reigns your gentle image, again to be restor’d to you. The Duke, who so justly appreciates your excellence, will think of his impatient son, and speedily recall him, to be once more united to the beloved, the peerless wife of his election : and this my father will not, I feel refuse, when he remembers the sacrifice my respect for his commands induces me to make, but will soon give me that recompense to which alone my heart aspires.”



“ Can you, my dear boy, doubt my readiness to add to your felicity? for I am now perfectly satisfied with the conduct of both.” “ And I,” said the Countess of Ormington, joy sparkling in her eye at the success of a scheme entirely her own planning, “ will do all I can to wear away the time of absence :” and she overwhelmed the poor victim of her diabolical arts with the most endearing caresses.

The birth of Lord Desmond had been the first blow struck against the ambitious hopes she had formed, of succeeding in her own person to the immense wealth of her father, and those honours which could centre in  
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the female line. From infancy she had disliked Rosanna; and as she grew in loveliness, that sentiment was by no means lessened. But to the proposed alliance between the families it was impossible she could form any reasonable objection, as the heiress to Mr. Fortescue's large fortune was to have been sought for by the most distinguished rank: and she saw the approaching marriage of her brother with much uneasiness; though, as it could not be prevented, the most interested observer would have been deceived into the belief that her own wishes were in perfect unison with those of the Duke and Marquis.

She had now two sons, and in their little persons she would gladly have centred the dignity and wealth of her family—a circumstance she thought yet possible; well knowing that, if any unforeseen event was to prevent the intended marriage, the affections of her brother were too deeply rooted ever to admit of his forming a second engagement. Perfectly convinced of this, she beheld with secret satisfaction, that the death of her father, and afterwards the threatened law-suit, would at least for some time retard the ceremony; and from this delay she built most sanguine hopes. Over the Duke she had gained so complete an ascendance,

cendance, that, well meaning himself, he was become the dupe to her artifice ; and he adopted all her plans as his own ideas ; and the suggestion of the Marquis's intended travels had been brought about by the artful contrivances of her Ladyship, who was really become the secret spring which moved all her father's actions. It would be almost impossible to say what were her intentions respecting the separation : but she built much on time and chance ; and above all on the chief blemish his Grace's character possessed, namely, too great love of money. For, should this disputed estate turn out in favour of the new claimant, Miss Fortescue

would still have a very splendid fortune. Yet she thought circumstances in that event might possibly occur, which would render the match less desirable to his Grace; and if that was to be the case, she flattered herself Lord Desmond would never think of uniting himself to any other woman; and that, by his remaining unmarried, she should at last secure for the sons of the Earl of Ormington the large estates of their grandfather.

It was now settled that the Marquis was to leave the Castle the following week; and his Lordship and Rosanna, who felt her courage fail,  
left

left the room to give utterance to the sorrow with which they were oppressed while visiting those walks which even in the gloom of winter had power to charm. Their tears blended as they again repeated that which had a thousand times been uttered, and each repetition with the same grateful feeling as at the first declaration of their passion; a passion, the early dawn of which could scarcely be traced, as it commenced even in their cradle; and in their gentle natures, where every kindly affection was inherent, it was fostered and encouraged by the soft zephyr of sincerity and unbounded confidence.

Those hearts who have felt an affection thus begun, thus dearly cherished, even in the days of childhood, where no after attachment ever taught the solitary heart to beat again in the same fond ardours, those and those only can judge what were the feelings of that moment in which they viewed a dreadful calamity levelling to the earth its high hopes, its sanguine expectations. Consider the days, the hours, the months, of anguished separation; and if you have ever endured its agonizing pangs, from the object of your early attachment, you will sympathise with those interesting lovers.

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The Countess, during their walk, had been contriving a plan to dis-  
sever those hearts so fondly, so early  
united ; and with much address had  
she arranged those arts which she  
had determined should make her  
successful, and at the same time  
render blind to her intention both  
the Duke and the amiable victims  
to her avarice and hypocrisy. Ro-  
fanna now entered the Castle, where  
she saw preparations already com-  
menced for his journey—a sight  
from which she turned with horror;  
and when she hastened into the  
drawing-room, she was received  
with every mark of affection by the  
Duke



Duke of Malvern and his deceitful daughter.

The next day Lord Desmond, in a conversation with his Rosanna, imparted to her a scheme he had formed, on the realizing of which his whole future happiness depended; and with the most tender effusions of his heart he informed her that it was his wish she would consent to become his wife before he quitted the Castle. He had gained to his interest both Doringfield and his Fanny; and the same license which had been procured for a former occasion would serve for the present;

present; their kind friend having agreed to weigh all consequences which might ensue to him from a discovery of the circumstance, and render his beloved pupils as happy as it was in his power to do, by securing them to each other.

Rosanna was not easily prevailed on to submit to the guidance of her Lord, unsanctioned by his father; but the Marquis, whose ardent nature could ill brook opposition, entreated, that if she would not see him expire through grief and despair, she would grant his prayer. " This very day, my love, Doringfield will perform a ceremony which  
will

will make you my own ; and oh, be careful of the decision you are about to make ! You know, my Rosanna, the character of your Desmond, and I swear, that if you refuse my request, to-morrow I shall cease to exist."

" My dearest Lord, I am yours ; you have a right to command that heart which adores you." These were the enchanting sounds which stole on his ear ; for anxiety and terror nearly rendered her voice unheard, as he sustained in his arms, and pressed to his bosom, the only being for whom it had ever beat to the soft tunes of love and rapture.

Rosanna

Rosanna soon found her heart had not heroism sufficient to reject the proposition made by the object dearest to her soul ; while memory lent her aid to revive the playful days of childhood, the more delightful ones of refined sensibility and affection, they had passed together. But this seducing picture was shaded with more gloomy tints ; she recollected her idolized parents ; and, in the enthusiasm of the moment, it seemed that their immortal spirits hovered round to watch her steps in this vale of misery.

There are situations in life which one can feel, but not describe : in  
such

such a one ~~was~~ Rosanna ; and she was near fainting. The Marquis perceived the tremor of her spirits, and, kneeling before her, exclaimed, " My gentle love, adored wife of my heart, can you forgive the ardour of that passion which has thus distressed you ? But suffer this to be the last struggle. Doringfield waits even at this blessed moment to make you mine ; and by his means we can in security brave all the events which it is yet possible may otherwise snatch you from my protecting arms."

Miss Fortescue, terrified by the fear of detection, combated with all the force her timid spirit would permit

mit the request of Lord Desmond ; but he vanquished at last all her resolves, and received from her trembling lips a consent to his proposition. He now seemed to have shaken off all recollection of his journey ; lightning was not more rapid than the transition, which now took place in his soul, from the depth of despair to joy the most pure and heartfelt. He snatched her to his heart, he called her by a thousand fond appellations, and painted with all the fire of true passion the happiness they yet would taste ; and resigned himself to all the transports a mind is capable of receiving which has for any time been compressed by affliction,

affliction, and which at one stroke receives into its dark abode the first rays of felicity unobscured by a passing cloud.

When the Marquis became in some degree master of himself, he traced to his beloved and interested auditor the plan Doringfield and himself had formed for their union, and requested she would be ready that evening to receive the nuptial benediction, and become indeed his own, the idol of his heart, the sole, the undivided blessing of his existence. The timid girl could scarcely partake in the new-born transports of her lover ; but in the presence of

Mrs.

Mrs. Doringfield, her own maid, and the valet of her Lord, she that evening became Marchioness of Desmond; and such precautions were taken as to preclude the possibility of a discovery.

The allotted week had now elapsed, and the morning dawned which was to separate those so tenderly united. The half frantic husband was almost forced from the trembling arms of his beautiful bride; then turning to his father, he recommended to his tender protection her on whom his existence depended. Often did he reach the door; then again returning, it appeared as if



if a fatal presentiment bound him to the spot. At length casting a look of agony on his Rosanna, who hid her convulsive sobs in the bosom of his sister, he rushed from the room that contained his every hope of future bliss, and followed the Duke, who was already at the door of the vestibule.

The instant it closed on her adored husband, Rosanna uttered a scream of horror, flying to her apartment, from the windows of which she could yet distinguish his Lordship, who had determined to make part of the journey on horseback. Her entire soul flew to her eyes, as if to lend them aid to distinguish

guish a form so regretted, so beloved. She dared scarcely breathe, and with one hand pressed on her bursting heart, with the other she wiped the tears which dimmed her sight. She blessed the uninterrupted view, which rendered him yet visible. At length an angle of the road tore him from her eager gaze; and in the society of his father and the Countess, whom she thought her friend, she endeavoured to calm her agitated mind.

But nothing had the power to steal from her the sorrows of her heart. Every spot served to remind her of lost pleasures. An unaccountable dread, an alarming languor, and restless

less lassitude, were spread over her frame ; tremulous and weakened accents marked her speech, and ceaseless sighs broke from her bosom ; for her soul was naturally a repository of affection and sensibility, which could be subdued but in the grave.

The Marquis made his journey to Dover under similar circumstances. Reflecting on the wife he had quitted, the beautiful country through which he travelled was lost on his observation. Wrapped in his own ideas, he neither saw nor heard the passing objects ; and when at length, after repeated attempts at conversation, politeness forced him to answer the questions

questions of his tutor, a monosyllable was nearly as much as that gentleman could collect from his taciturn companion ; unless indeed it was to inquire the number of miles they had yet to travel before they should reach Dover.

Every thing had been prepared in London for the departure of his Lordship ; and the travelling carriage, and suite appointed to attend them, were in waiting on their arrival at Malvern House. So that, nothing occurring to retard their impatience, they quitted town within an hour after they had entered it ; and with difficulty could the Marquis be pre-

vailed on even to take the refreshment or repose nature demanded as her right. In those hours dedicated to sleep he began a letter to his wife, in which he dwelt on his affection, his regret, and sorrow, giving way without restraint to all the incoherencies which are a certain characteristic of violent passion.

It would be both unnecessary and uninteresting to trouble the reader with an account of his Lordship's tour : suffice it to say, it was made with an appointment befitting the Duke of Malvern's heir, and that at every court he visited, the captivated Marquis did not fail to make great  
havock

havock in the hearts of the most admired belles. But, notwithstanding their acknowledged attractions, his heart confessed no charms but those of his Rosanna. The Duke had decided for him to make some stay at the Court of Naples—a proposal to which his Lordship made no objection ; to whom, if he was to linger in banishment, it was perfectly immaterial what spot contained his body, while his soul was chained to England.

The Minister at that time resident from the Court of St. James's to his Neapolitan Majesty of course showed our amiable traveller all the

marked respect which politeness in his situation in life demanded, and which Sir James Malcolm was never known to fail in to those who by merit or rank had a claim on his attention. The honours of his house were performed with graceful ease by an only daughter. The amiable Anne could not with truth have been termed handsome, but for that inexpressible gentleness imprinted on her features, to which was united so much sensibility and benevolence, as impressed on her those graces that are to many preferable to the most finished beauty, if unaccompanied by manners which win on the heart, and steal your good opinion by

by the modest blandishments of timidity and retiring softness.

Lord Desmond was soon prejudiced in favour of Miss Malcolm, and thought her, next to his Rosanna, the most interesting and amiable young woman he had ever seen. That pleasure we feel in a distant country from meeting an agreeable person who comes from the same part of the globe with ourselves, soon made these amiable young people find much satisfaction in the society of each other. But, as the Marquis was much too honourable ever to wish at inspiring hopes which could never be realized, he confided



to his new and charming friend his attachment, though not his marriage, to Miss Fortescue.



“ Who is it,” cried his Lordship one day, in describing the perfections of his wife, “ can do justice to the charms of her angelic soul, the gentleness of her mind, or the superior and distinguished qualities with which she is adorned? Her beauty,” continued he with animation, “ the softened majesty of her air, and her modest sweetness, command admiration, give birth to love, and produce enthusiasm; but neither love, admiration, nor enthusiasm, in their origin, their progress,  
or

or developement, can express what are my sentiments respecting her I adored even before I knew what love meant. I idolized her when insensible of the existence of passion ; I considered her as the gentle companion of my walk through the rugged paths of life ; the charms of whose presence I compared to the soft splendour of a summer's day, from which not the smallest cloud appeared to shadow my felicity."

The reader will judge by his own feelings, how inexpressibly dear it is to the heart occupied with one entire object to meet a soul who, from the sweetest impulse of nature's never-

varying benevolence, will enter into our wishes so far as to accept an unreserved confidence; and who possesses refinement of the mind sufficient to understand all you would say, but which at certain strange seasons must not be said. A friend so desirable the Marquis had found in the gentle Anne, who, had not her heart been already guarded by a prior attachment, would most certainly have fallen a victim to unrequited affection.

In the letters he addressed to his wife, he spoke of Miss Malcolm in terms of approbation; but she, judging of her Lord's constancy by her own,

own, felt no uneasy sensation that he could distinguish, and flatter with his approbation, an amiable and deserving young woman. But the superior attention he ever paid to her, and the balm his heart received from her gentle tones and the unruffled sweetness of her disposition, were, by the numerous frequenters of the Minister's table, set down to a more powerful attraction; and the elegant Marquis was soon regarded as the lover of Miss Malcolm. And it must be allowed, there appeared nothing very unlikely in a connection taking place between two amiable young persons, who evidently re-

ceived so much satisfaction in the society of each other. But Sir James, as well as his fair daughter, knew the heart of his Lordship was safely deposited in his own clime, and did not suffer any idea of the kind to gain possession of his mind.

The tutor appointed to accompany his Lordship was a person recommended to his Grace by Lady Ormington. It had been hinted to him by her Ladyship, that as the fortune of Miss Fortescue would in all probability turn out much less than had been expected by the Duke, he would have much satisfaction, should any circumstance occur

to

to dissolve the engagement—though it was a subject on which his Grace did not himself choose to enter. But the complaisant governor was given to understand, he would not be any loser by agreeing to follow the directions of her Ladyship, which he should from time to time receive on the business; and the conscience of this obsequious tool of her arts was silenced by the most weighty of all arguments to the black soul of guilt.

For some time the correspondence was continued between the Marquis and his lovely wife with the most passionate fervor; nor did the tutor omit to mention, in his English dispatches,

spatches, the pleasure his Lordship appeared to take in the society of the amiable daughter of the English Minister.

Lord Desmond one day received a packet from England. Mr. Bennett, at the time it arrived, was making a visit a short distance from Naples, in which indisposition had prevented his Lordship from accompanying him. On his return in the evening, he was greatly surprised on beholding the agitated state in which he beheld his pupil, who appeared nearly allied to madness. Seizing the hand of his governor, he exclaimed, "I must this instant begin my journey,

ney, or I shall never more behold my angel Rosanna, whom neither my father nor the united world shall longer divide me from." Overpowered by these passionate exclamations, the Marquis grew still more pale, and sunk almost motionless on the arm of Mr. Bennett.

"My dear Lord," said the sycophant, "calm yourself sufficiently to tell me what it is has occasioned this alarm, and the terrible state in which I now see you. Yet surely I already guess something must have happened to Miss Fortescue—Is—"—"Married and Marchioness of Desmond," repeated he in a voice of fury, at the  
bare



bare idea that the spotless fame of his angel wife should for a moment be a subject of doubt, through his own imprudent conduct, in leaving her, unprotected, to bear the suspicions of those who knew not she had for many months a right to his decided protection.

The Marchioness's letter appeared written under the most agonizing apprehensions. She mentioned her uneasiness at not having for some time received any letters from him; at the same time acquainting him, a short period only would elapse before she should become a mother; a circumstance which, under the  
present

present situation she was in, had occasioned the most dreadful alarm.

“ Ah, my adored Lord,” she wrote, “ a something whispers me I shall never more behold the husband of my soul’s best affections, the only friend on whom my heart depends ! Will that blessed day ever again arrive, when in your sheltering arms I shall be at liberty to tell you all the sorrows I have encountered—in that long, long period, which to my eyes seems wrapt in funereal darkness, during the eternity of whose gloom I am not to look forward even for the smallest gleam of consolation, as without your permission

sion never will your Rosanna disclose the secret of our union, though my own reputation should even become a sacrifice. Could I be permitted to see you, to behold that face, those looks of tender love, with which you have ever regarded the companion of your infancy, the friend of your riper years, and now, blessed certainty ! the wife of your affections, I could bear up under every circumstance. But now, as you are so far from me, the consciousness of duplicity has made a coward of your Rosanna, and I tremble when the mild countenance of your father is turned towards my altered figure. Lady Ormington at times,

I am

I am almost tempted to believe, has guessed at the true cause of my indisposition ; but nothing shall be discovered by me, till I receive your commands how I am to proceed in a case which under more favourable circumstances would render us completely happy. Mr. Doringfield and his amiable Fanny are my only supports ; they it is who keep up my spirits, and with a cheering hope of being shortly re-united to my idolized husband, and giving to his embrace the infant image of its father.

“ Lady Ormington expects her Lord at Bellevue, and shortly after  
his

his arrival the Castle will be quite deserted. Doringfield and his wife are going to take possession of a living in North Wales; and your sister and Lord Ormington propose making an excursion into Yorkshire, where Lord Ormington has some business to transact; and after so long a separation he will not so soon again consent to leave her behind. She kindly wishes me to accompany her, thinking the change of scene will serve to recruit my health and spirits; and makes use of many arguments to induce me to support your absence with patience. But can I benefit by those, when they exhort me to be well and happy, in a  
state

state of separation from him in whose presence I alone desire to live?"

"I will this moment set off for England," cried his impetuous Lordship, "and remove all anxiety from the breast of my angel wife. Let the consequence be what it may with my father, no consideration shall now detain me from her, and that dear child she will soon bring into the world."

A letter from his Grace hinted he had every reason to fear the suit instituted for the recovery of the Heathside property would terminate

nate in favour of the male heir ; and the penetrating Marquis fancied he discovered in his Grace's expressions, when he mentioned his wife, less of affection than he usually made use of when speaking of her.

To the entreaties of Mr. Bennett he acceded so far, as to wait the time necessary for the preparations prior to his removal ; and as winter was now far advanced, and great part of the roads very indifferent at that season, together with the delay occasioned by procuring passports, his journey would necessarily take up some time to accomplish. And ardently as he longed openly to avow his

his

his marriage, reflection told him; it was more than probable he would become a father before it was declared he had a right to the title of a husband. But, much uneasiness as this reflection gave him, he received every consolation from the knowledge that Mr. and Mrs. Doringfield would at the risk of every thing protect his adored wife, even should the Duke withdraw his sanction from her. And should he be cruel enough to do so, his own speedy arrival in England would soon restore her to the affections of his father, and the good opinion of the world, when it should be publicly known she was in reality his daughter.

By



By the Marquis's precipitate return to England, and open avowal of his marriage, the astonished tutor was thrown quite off his guard ; and there not being any time for him to receive his instructions, and well knowing the determined disposition of his Lordship, he made use of some remonstrances at first, to prevent his design being put in execution ; but finding them ineffectual, he made a virtue of necessity, and at length acceded to his resolves.

While our travellers are returning by the way of Germany, we will precede them to the Castle, and take a peep at the manner in which Lady Ormington, with the interesting

ing Marchioness lived. Since her Lord's departure from England, his letters were her only consolation, which she read over a thousand and a thousand times, in those walks where she once fondly hung on his arm in all the enthusiasm of affection. The amiable Doringfield and his wife were the only beings who knew all the secrets of her heart, or in whose presence she now dared trust her trembling accents to pronounce the beloved name of her husband. These affectionate creatures did all they could to support her spirits: but no consolation had the power to assuage her sorrow; and she was now almost become serene

rene in misery ; for it is very possible, after ceaseless hours of passionate anguish, to be even reconciled to the barbed arrow yet rankling in the wound.

Thus did the time drag heavily along with the affectionate wife, unsuspecting of the storm about to burst over her devoted head, and submitting in patient sweetness to the will of that parent on whose promise she relied. She now began to calculate with inexpressible delight, that a few short months would restore her to happiness and Desmond. Till this period his letters had been frequent, regular, and tender,

as

as her own wishes could have desired them ; but all at once they came less often, though equally affectionate. At length for some weeks she ceased to receive any. No expression can do justice to the sorrow, the inquietude of Rosanna, at the mystery which enveloped his conduct in the shade of doubt. Yet, to believe it possible he could be in fault, was not in the nature of his wife ; it was Desmond suffering through illness which was the idea so insupportable to her tenderness, the supposition of which circumstance almost burst her heart, and caused distress of mind, and the weary sigh of a wounded spirit, to be visible through

every fibre that supported her existence. For sorrow will in silence make its way on the frame, and often express that which the tongue on some occasions dares not utter.

Unceasing expectation of letters which she did not receive, threw her into such agitating tremors as, in her situation, threatened the worst consequences; and would have filled any breast, less hardened in duplicity than that of Lady Ormington, with confusion and repentance for having secreted from her those letters which she had intercepted, and by which she had discovered the secret of their marriage, and by so doing was short-  
ening

ening the days of one of the most fragile blossoms of mortality.

One morning, after passing a restless night, in which sleep was a stranger to her weary eyes, she besought Lady Ormington, if possible, to explain a reason for her brother's terrifying silence. Her Ladyship kindly embraced the lamb at whose throat she held the murderous knife, and in the most affectionate way confessed that she was not herself without some alarm: "I cannot," she continued, after a few moment's reflection, "believe him ill, because, though I omitted to inform you of the circumstance, about eight days since

since my father got a letter from Bennett, respecting some money matters, in which he mentions my brother having accompanied him to a superb fête, given by the Queen of Naples, at which the Marquis was the gayest of the gay, and the object of universal admiration to the fair circle assembled; but that, according to custom, his whole and undivided attention was centred in the beautiful Miss Malcolm, daughter of the English Minister at that court."

Rosalina, pale and trembling, respired with extreme difficulty; it seemed as if she still listened to the

words

words uttered by the Countess, long after she had ceased to speak. A dreadful idea crossed her imagination, and caused her palpitating heart to nearly burst its confines ;—her adored Desmond frequenting balls ! and, leaving her a prey to the tortures of agonized distress, to be thus particular in his attentions to another, in whose praise all he had ever wrote to her rose in confirmation of the dreadful certainty she had a rival ! The fixed opinion of his constancy, the firm faith which had pleaded so long, so tenderly for him, circumstances seemed to oblige her finally to relinquish, and to give up the basis on which her felicity was built,



built, a determined confidence in his worth and tenderness; the most dreadful trial which can be inflicted on a heart fondly attached, and a mind governed by virtuous principles, to whom alone affection can be grateful, while esteem animates its tenderness, and mutual fondness cherishes its softness. For, to know herself his wife, and that it was past the power of human fate to separate them in this world, was not any consolation to her generous heart. Far from it. Once convinced she was no longer necessary to his happiness, she would have resigned all her rights, if by so doing she could have contributed to the peace of him she loved

loved with disinterested fondness, though her own life would have been the sacrifice.

In a state bordering on distraction, feeling she should shortly become a mother, and yet determined, until her husband's permission sanctioned the avowal, her true situation should remain a secret from his family, she quitted Lady Ormington, and entered her own dressing-room; where, flinging on the table all the letters of the Marquis, she sought out those in which the name of Anne Malcolm caught her eye, and at first ran them over without having the power of discriminating their

contents. Then, being a little more calm, she endeavoured to trace, if possible, any sentiment more tender than approbation of her amiable qualities and good disposition; and notwithstanding present cruel appearances, which had for the first time made her taste of the bitter draught of jealousy, she was obliged to acknowledge to her suspicious heart, that he had not insulted her with any thing like an avowal of tenderness to another.

Reflection now succeeded to the first burst of wounded sensibility, perhaps too active, and the tearful eyes of the interesting Marchioness rested

rested on those objects which surrounded her, each of whom recalled the idea of him who was never absent from her thoughts. The walls of her dressing-room were ornamented by drawings, which in happier days, now gone for ever, had been the occupation of her Lord, when, seated by each other, they shared their instructions and played together. Again, her vacant looks were riveted on the instruments of harmony on which he had accompanied the song she sung.

On the morning he had quitted the Castle, she had thrown a hat he had been wearing on her table,

where it continued to remain; and never was sainted relic more fondly worshipped by the most bigoted devotee, than was the hat which had been worn by him on whom her every thought was fixed:—nor is it romantic or impossible that a trifle should be so valued, so fondly prized, or that, next to the inanimate representative of that face on which her looks could hang for ever, it should be the most beloved treasure she possessed.

She drew the idolized portrait from her bosom, and appeared to see, for the first time, his gentle smile; those mild eyes, which, when turned  
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on her, had ever been animated by unspeakable tenderness. The recollection made her shudder: 'It is thus perhaps, thought she, he now looks at Miss Malcolm!' hastily replacing the picture in that situation from which she determined no power should snatch it, either in life or death, unless it was the wish of that husband she should relinquish it; and his smallest request she had never yet the power to refuse; and after having imprinted a thousand kisses on the unconscious representative, it was returned to that bosom where it had ever rested in all the dominion of unbounded affection.

In recalling to her tortured remembrance the information given her by his sister, she recollected the interest with which she seemed to partake in those sorrows she could not but perceive ; and it occurred to her, that something respecting the Marquis was yet concealed from her knowledge : and as suspense is ever more difficult to support than even the most dreadful certainty, she determined to demand the confirmation of those fears, which in desperate firmness she resolved to ascertain.

With a tottering step she descended to the breakfast-room, in the hope  
of

of meeting the Duke or his daughter. As she reached the door, a dimness seemed to obscure her sight, and she stopped a moment without turning the lock she held in her hand. At last she entered ; but the apartment was vacant, though work and some scattered letters, which now lay on the table, announced that the Countess had but just quitted it ; and from one of those unexpected revolutions of passion which sometimes agitate the human mind, Rossanna felt relieved that she had not met those she had come to seek. It seemed the absence of that judge from whose sentence she would receive life or death. Impatience, inquietude,



quietude, curiosity, murmured in vain against this delay: the terrors of having the most distressing of her fears realized, served to make even this temporary suspension of them appear like a calm, and in a sort of listless languor she seated herself by the fire.

She had remained some time in a state of inaction, when her eyes happened to fix on a paper thrown under the grate: it appeared to have dropped out of the fire after having been consigned to the flames, for part of it was already scorched. Thinking accident must have occasioned it to fall from the table, she stooped

to pick it up; when, having opened it, she uttered a scream of terror, and remained for some moments immovable. These fatal words had caught her eye—‘Miss Fortescue, I think, is at last supplanted in the affections of the Marquis.’ At length she summoned courage to read the conclusion of that letter, which had involuntarily to herself been opened to her. ‘He loves another, most certainly loves her.’—“I can no longer doubt my wretchedness!” and she fell back in her chair, hiding her face with her hands, and for some time remained insensible. The entrance of the Countess, her caresses, the cries, the tears, of her affectionate

tionate Mrs. Doringfield, had not power to draw from her one word, or to raise her from that state of lethargic stupor into which her senses were plunged; and in which she continued for more than an hour, with her eyes fixed, and her beautiful hands clasped on a heart the convulsive motion of which terrified those about her.

"Our dear Miss Fortescue is lost to us," exclaimed the trembling agitated Fanny. "What would be the distraction of the Marquis could he behold her thus!" "My husband! oh, my husband!" repeated she in a solemn tone, and lifting

lifting up her eyes to Heaven; then casting them down, she relapsed into her former insensibility. She was conveyed to her bed, on which she suffered herself to be laid without the smallest opposition. A fever and delirium succeeded; to which latter circumstance Mrs. Doringfield had attributed to the Countess those expressions made use of by Rosanna, which would else have discovered the secret of her marriage. The Duke had lately in a great degree been weaned by his daughter's arts from the wish he had before entertained of seeing his son and Rosanna united; and her efforts had unfortunately been assisted

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ed by the opinion of the ablest lawyers, who had informed his Grace the claims of Mr. Fortescue would in all probability succeed in gaining possession of that property, which at first made him seek an alliance with the lovely girl who now lay on the bed of sickness.

His Grace, naturally humane, could not be uninterested in the fate of her he had from infancy considered as his daughter; and the Machiavelian Countess, who saw the workings of affection on his Grace's mind, drew him from his attentions to her, and he soon again fell into his usual state of indifference

ence respecting the affair ; for he had not determined to put an end to the engagement, though he now ceased to think of it with satisfaction, as the loss of seven thousand a year in the fortune of his once-intended daughter-in-law would have made a considerable difference to most fathers, even had they been without the seeds of avarice in their heart.

In the course of a few days the fever left her, and her danger appeared subsided ; so that Mrs. Dor-  
 ingtonfield remained alone by the bedside of her beloved friend. About six in the morning the soft voice of Rosanna was heard by her attentive nurse ;

nurse; she sweetly thanked her for all her cares, and requested to have her writing materials brought. Mrs. Doringfield indulged her interesting friend: but the excessive pale hue on the face of the object of her solicitude struck her with inconceivable terror: she appeared calm and resigned; but her beautiful hazel eyes, generally so soft in their expression, now sparkled with melancholy splendour; many ringlets of pale brown hair had escaped from the muslin handkerchief with which they had been confined, and shaded a forehead and neck of alabaster; and the soft smile which played over her colourless lips, gave to her whole face

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an expression so heart-rending, as caused the tears to fall fast on the cheeks of sympathizing friendship.

"My dear Fanny," said the lovely Marchioness, "should death snatch me from this world before I again behold my idolized husband, swear to me, that you and Doringfield will protect his child, and never resign it but to the arms of its father."

This excellent woman promised all she desired; but told her she was certain the Marquis was not to blame, and that all would yet turn out to their mutual happiness. She made



made no reply; but putting the letter she had just been writing into her hands, she requested Doringfield to forward it to her Lord.

### LETTER.

“ When ties sacred as those which bind our destiny, are loosened by inconstancy or caprice, reproaches I feel are useless: neither is it my wish to make any. Unfortunate husband! when will you ever find a heart so fondly attached as that of your adoring Rosanna? a soul so well according with your own? a companion so necessary to the happiness of your life? for, do not deceive yourself, my still beloved Desmond!

mond ! my remembrance will ever attach itself, will ever play round your heart, from which not even the now happy object of its wandering affections will have the power to dispossess my prior, my unalienable rights ; nor ever can a new attachment replace to you the inexpressible claims I have on your tenderness. Yes, she will one day feel, that fyren who has drawn from me the heart of a husband, what it is to be deserted by the man she loves. For, can you be faithful to another after having betrayed your wife ? Ah, no ! that I feel to be impossible. Desmond, my own, my fondly beloved husband, recall those happy  
days

days of infancy, when separated for  
 an hour we were both unhappy;  
 those still more delightful ones when  
 we first began to feel the charms of  
 living but to constitute the felicity of  
 each other ! Recall them, did I say ?  
 Ah ! if your heart be callous to these  
 remembrances, if the accents of for-  
 row which escape from mine are not  
 responsive to the feelings of yours,  
 reply not to me. It is your heart I  
 claim; without that, your pity or the  
 attentions duty may demand, would  
 be insupportable : but, if you yet  
 think of me with affection, if, the  
 dupe of a transient partiality, you  
 may have mistaken it for a more  
 settled affection, do not allow the  
 shame

shame of confessing it to keep you  
 from your wife. Dearest Desmond,  
 with what transport shall I pardon  
 an error which has already cost me  
 so much sorrow ! But reflect well  
 before you reply ; let not a falsehood  
 stain your letters to her who must  
 ever idolize you ; that she may still  
 continue to esteem you even if she  
 is forced to resign your heart ; in  
 which case, never will she claim  
 your plighted vows, but retire with  
 the infant pledge of that love you  
 once bore me, till time shall have re-  
 stored you to the sense of my affec-  
 tion, my injuries, and sorrows ; when  
 my arms will be ever ready to re-

ceive the husband of my soul, the idolized father of my child. Could you have supposed I should ever write a sentence like this? And will you read it without being moved to agony? Reply instantly, or remain silent for ever. But I charge you, my loved Lord, by our former tenderness, to reflect, the latter step will inform me that in this life there is no longer any happiness for me. Should it be so, I shall devoutly pray the Almighty to make you as happy as you have rendered me miserable: blessings can extend no further: and, oh! may God shower down upon you every felicity, and may you ne-

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ver reproach yourself upon my account ! but, if in this case, receive the eternal adieu of your wife."

Soon after writing this appeal to the affections of her Lord, Rosanna arose and requested to see the Countess. She speedily obeyed the summons, and, with all the warmth of pretended affection, congratulated her on her returning health, and fondly inquired what it was that had occasioned the paroxysm of grief in which she had been found on the morning she was so suddenly attacked.



" Ask me not," replied the  
 H 2                      wretched

wretched girl, “ what even to you I cannot disclose. Suffice it to say, chance has spared you the disagreeable task of informing me, by a letter addressed to you which accident threw into my hands, that I am no longer dear to your brother; that I have a rival in his heart. This circumstance it is which has occasioned me such sorrow.”

The Countess endeavoured to sooth her into a calm by the common place remarks of young men’s inconstancy, and the little dependence that was to be placed on them. She now proposed her taking a little air; and leaning without suspicion  
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on the arm of her bitterest foe, they descended to the park ; where every object reminded her of lost happiness, as she slowly retraced those spots where her husband had vowed his heart would never know another love. Solitude now appeared in the most gloomy colours. It was robbed of all that soft melancholy, that voluptuous tint, which is ever attached to those objects that recall scenes of former felicity. But it was now to the most agonizing pangs of jealousy and despair she had resigned her gentle nature : and so absorbed was she by such sensations, that the harmony of returning spring was lost upon her. The



throbs of her heart, as she passed those places which had witnessed her former happiness, seemed to threaten a speedy dissolution. Fatigued by her walk, and almost annihilated by the violence of those passions to which till now her serene spirit had been a stranger, she prevailed on Lady Ormington to return home; and finding the necessity of flying from her own thoughts if she would preserve her life, in the preservation of which that of her infant was yet involved, she went to the nursery in which the children of the Countess were playing.

Henry Neville was then about  
four

four years old. The perfect resemblance this child bore to the Marquis, his infantine caresses, and the interesting manner in which, by the aid of words, he at all times evinced his partiality for Rosanna, had now such an effect on her harassed spirits, that tears in torrents rushed from her eyes. The terrified boy cast his little arms round her neck, and, as if weeping for the same cause, the pearly drops trickled fast over his polished cheek. She pressed the sweet mourner to her breast, and covered his pretty face with kisses.

At this moment, the Duke, who

was passing the nursery door, was drawn by Lord Beauchamp into the room, and beheld the interesting party with a degree of admiration which made him, for the moment, look forward to that period with pleasure which would give him a daughter-in-law so lovely, so amiable.

“ Dear grandpapa,” lisped the compassionate Henry, “ do kiss Miss Fortescue, and she will never cry any more, but be very good always :” then seizing his Grace’s hand, he drew him close towards them ; and the Duke, bending his  
face,

face, printed a kiss of kindness on the cheek of her who had ever regarded him as a father.

The soft eye of Rosanna sparkled with joy at this return of paternal tenderness from the parent of her husband, who, she observed with pain, had for some time forgotten to treat her with his former regard; the return of which had such an effect on her grateful breast, that, but for the promise made his son not to disclose till his return the secret of their marriage, that moment would have informed his Grace of *all the claims* she had upon him.

Weeks, months, are now passed away without bringing to the anxious agitated wife the reply for which she waited in the most horrible state of suspense. At the end of that time, her foreboding heart informed her this ardently desired letter would never now arrive, and that a cloud had passed over all her hopes of future happiness. For the Duke still continued to receive letters as usual from the Governor, which constantly spoke of the Marquis's health, but not a line from his own hand to any of the family.

It is a duty we owe this amiable young man, to declare this apparent  
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negligence on his part was owing to all the letters he had written to his wife after he had been a short time absent, having been taken up by that tool of the Countess, the unworthy Bennett, and all forwarded to England under cover to her Ladyship, who secreted them from her wretched victim, and by that means destroyed her peace; and in the end, her life was the sacrifice to injustice and inhumanity.

About this period Mr. Doringfield was to take possession of a living, procured by his Grace for the quondam tutor of his son. It was situated in one of the most romantic

tic parts of North Wales; and Rossanna thought, could she gain permission to accompany her friends, she would with much ease contrive, under the plea of indisposition, to continue with them until the expected little stranger had made its appearance;—by which time its father would return, and, she yet hoped, claim both mother and infant with the raptures of a husband and a father.

Anxious to put in execution a project which in some degree removed her anxiety, she hastened to communicate the scheme to Mr. and Mrs. Doringfield, who highly applauded

plauded the thought, and assured her of every care and attention from them; advising her, as the most likely way to succeed, first to mention her wish to Lady Ormington, and engage her interest with the Duke of Malvern, who, from being her sole guardian, had a double right on her actions. She immediately went to her Ladyship, saying, "Your brother, my dear friend, informs me by his neglectful silence, that I must renounce the only blessing this life could have afforded me. Circumstanced as I am," cried she, clasping her hands in agony, "I cannot remain in a place whose every object speaks of joys never, never to return."



turn. For God's sake then, if you love me, gain permission of the Duke for me to accompany my dear Fanny to Wales, where, from change of scene, I may perhaps regain my lost health ; and if on the Marquis's arrival he has yet a wish once more to behold me, he can do so by coming to the house of our respectable friend.

An exclamation of delight had nearly escaped the lips of Lady Ormington at this very unexpected proposal, which struck her as so favourable to her dark schemes. But she recollected herself in time to reassume the mask of sorrow, and the

the credulous Rosanna fancied she listened to the accents of regret, when she sought to deter her from her resolution ; by which method she only endeavoured to bind her the more firmly, by her apparent unwillingness to comply. - At length, after many persuasions that she would continue with them, she gave her promise to use her endeavours with her father. But it seemed rather to be extorted from her conviction, than sanctioned by her heart.

That night at supper, his Grace, with an air of sadness, informed his lovely ward, he would not oppose her going for a short time with Mrs.

Doring-

Doringfield. " But," added he, " I fancy that I need not remind you, a few months will restore to us our Desmond, when I fancy you will no longer wish to rob us of your society; and I trust, spite of all the dissipation and folly so prevalent at his time of life, we may yet spend many happy days together. I know, in the mean time, our good little Fanny will treat you with kindness and affection; and I trust, on your return to us, I shall again see the roses and lilies blooming on your cheeks, which at present, my dear girl, it grieves me to observe are so sadly faded."

Her

Her complexion was, at this unexpected kindness from the Duke, animated by the most brilliant carnation ; a sort of extultation was visible in her eyes, and in the movement and expression with which she clasped, with the emotions of filial duty and affection, the hands of his Grace, who appeared as if his long dormant sensibility was raised ; and with tenderness he pressed her some moments to his heart, as he said, " My dear Rosanna, in me you will ever possess a parent's tenderness : ask what you will of me, and your demands I will ever answer and acknowledge."

Every

Every thing was soon arranged for the projected journey; and at seven o'clock one morning the beginning of May, Miss Doringfield's coach was at the door, and her own old servants, who had come from Heathside to bid their beloved mistress adieu, as well as the domestics of the Duke, with sorrow at heart and tears trickling down their cheeks, with silence spoke the feelings which appeared in the accents of despair to say, "Never more shall we behold that sweet angel in this world!" And, indeed, her altered form and changed countenance too plainly marked her as the early victim of death.

The

The morning was dark and rainy; a gray shadowy fog was spread on the surrounding scenery, which rendered the passing objects as gloomy as the mind of the Marchioness, over which sorrow had thrown her misty veil. With what energy did she pray for the appointed hour ! while her aching heart, sick of the void within, anticipated that peace which death alone could restore ; whilst hope allured her with the belief that its strides were rapid in their approach. But the affectionate kindness of her travelling companion in a degree kept up their attention to the beautiful scenery of the country through which she passed.

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On embracing Rosanna for the last time, the Countess could not refrain from a sentiment of admiration, she appeared so lovely, so touchingly interesting. What a pity, thought her Ladyship, that, to secure my happiness, she must be sacrificed! For one moment only did this spark of compassion rise to her breast, ere it was again swallowed up in that heart where ambition and avarice had established their empire; and where, having no divine pilot at the helm, unconquerable pride whispered great things must be done to secure the possession of the vast estates which she had determined on reserving to herself.

On

On the third evening the carriage entered into a deep valley between two large mountains, the borders of which were fringed with woods of oaks; they passed with difficulty over a winding rocky road, just as the golden radiance of the descending sun gilded the tops of the dark foliage, and glittered on the casement windows of a few scattered cottages, whose white walls, bespangled with flint stones, peeped through the mass of shadow, and gave to its romantic gloom a more decided contrast. The profound silence of the scene was only interrupted by the rustling of the long branches as they swept the side of the carriage as  
it



it passed the narrow road ; and the monotonous sounds of the village clock, which was then striking eight, and was repeated by many echoes from the neighbouring rocks, and which carried with each vibration a feeling of melancholy pleasure.

Mrs. Doringfield now inquired if they had nearly reached their journey's end, and whether they were to become inhabitants of this sweet sequestered spot? She was still speaking, when the carriage, having made the angle of a bold projecting rock, which at first seemed to have placed its flinty bosom as a bar to their proceeding further, stopped before  
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a neat white gate, which being opened, they drove through it to the most comfortable little abode of which imagination could form an idea, and to which the lovely Marchioness was welcomed with expressions of the most sincere affection by its worthy and hospitable owners.

Servants had been already settled there, and every comfort of domestic life was visible on their first entrance into this sweet retreat of friendship and seclusion. But neither the tenderness of those she truly regarded, nor the novel and beautiful scenery by which she was surrounded, could root out the barbed arrow of the  
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profound sorrow to which she had resigned herself. She no longer thought of the common occurrences of life; her only conversation was of her husband; and of him she would talk for hours, recommending to the care of her friends the innocent child of her Lord, should she be permitted to survive long enough to give it life. Of her own death she spoke with a composure that resembled indifference.

A month had elapsed since their arrival in Wales, and still no news of the Marquis, though Rosanna constantly received letters, both from the Duke and Lady Ormington—but

nothing which could give her satisfaction transpired from their contents. The newspapers were regularly sent from Bellevue to Mrs. Doringfield.

One evening, that the dejected Marchioness sat at work, the servant brought them from the neighbouring town. To her usual question of, Are there any letters for me? the man replied in the usual negative, which seemed ever doomed to meet her ear, and the papers were carelessly thrown on the table before her. Doringfield was not returned from his afternoon ramble; and the Marchioness, to divert her kind

Fanny, who was employed in making some preparations for the hourly expected infant, took up one of the papers, knowing that to a mind unoccupied by its own sorrows, and at a distance from those scenes and persons to whom we have been accustomed; every trifle which comes from thence is of consequence; and prepared to give her the news of a world, from which, in their present sequestered retirement; they appeared almost excluded,

She had read several paragraphs, when the following caught her eye — “The Marquis of Desmond, son and heir to the Duke of Malvern, is shortly

shortly expected to receive at the altar of Hymen the fair hand of Miss Malcolm, daughter of Sir James Malcolm, the Minister from his Britannic Majesty to the Court of Naples ; after which, the new married couple will immediately return to England."

A cry of terror made Mrs. Doringfield raise her eyes, when she beheld the Marchioness pale and motionless, in which situation she lay an alarming length of time : but, on a return of recollection, she found herself supported by Doringfield, while her head, like a drooping lily, was reclined on the compassionate

sionate and sympathizing bosom of his Fanny. "Oh, dearest sir!" said she in a voice scarcely audible, "I am now indeed lost for ever! and I feel life, like a departing friend, will take a short farewell!" And from the deadly hue of her lovely face, and the despondency expressed both in her words and manner, they feared the most fatal termination to this interesting victim; and with every sentiment of the most lively compassion, in the silver tones of sympathy, they conveyed to her the sound reasonings of religion—that *only* balm of comfort to the truly sorrowing, from whose divine resource the heart, even at the first moment

ment when the sufferer feels its earliest wound, will find the soft still voice of piety whisper peace.

During her state of insensibility, Doringfield had beheld the fatal sentence of her misery. He had long entertained well-founded doubts of the Countess's sincerity, and did not approve of the frequent correspondence held between her Ladyship and the gentleman who accompanied the Marquis on his tour: and the present unaccountable silence of his Lordship was by this penetrating and good man set down to the right cause. Therefore, unwilling to add by mere surmises, which he



had not the power to prove, to the burden of Rosanna's sorrows, the idea of duplicity in the conduct of one she had ever considered as her friend, he only hinted them to Fanny, the gentle repository of all his pains and pleasures, and trusted the return of his Lordship would explain all which now appeared so ambiguous and mysterious in his conduct. For to believe him guilty of such premeditated cruelty, was not in the soul of the man who had implanted every virtue in his heart. "My dearest madam," said Doringfield, wishing to reason her into something like composure by his pious arguments, "true religion is still and calm; gentle and serene;

serene; not elevated by passion, nor depressed by despair, but constant and uniform, the result of reason, and the daughter of truth. Born for the world, and living for each other, religion aims not to hide us from mankind, but to teach us the amiable lesson of resignation and social harmony, as well as the humble expressions of pious hope. Consider well, your own life, and that of your unborn babe, depend on your vanquishing this frantic sensibility: and should this dark curtain be withdrawn, and your happy prospects be restored, by the return of him whom you now mourn as lost, the indulgence of this excessive sor-

row will render you incapable of supporting the change ; and the bitter pangs of unavailing repentance will too late overtake you ; when owing to your having thus given yourself to despair, you will be rendered incapable of again tasting of the pure fountain of felicity. I know that resignation is the most trying of all virtues ; but I yet hope to see you exert it for the sake of him to whom, believe me, you are yet most dear."

Josephina listened to the good man without interruption ; her tears had ceased to flow, and her countenance reassumed the calm serenity which

which for some time had formed its habitual expression. "My melancholy days," said she, "are blotted by disappointment. The wearied child of sorrow, with a heart broken, can only express her gratitude for the kindness with which you treat one who bears, by God's own appointment, the standard of affliction; which, till death forces it from my hand, or I am once more united to my Lord, I never can resign.

"Believe me, my dear sis, my kind Fanny," she continued, "that the tears I shed are not the tears of weakness, but those of disappointed affection; and these I glory in. To

be superior to the calls of nature I boast not, to be beneath them I scorn. Heaven, which gave me affections, has, and will, I trust, of its goodness, guide them right. I do not aim at that vain philosophy, which would give to feeble nature the unfeeling attributes of stone.

“ Perhaps,” said she, faintly smiling, “ my Desmond is himself unhappy, and may yet justify his seeming barbarity to his poor forsaken Rosanna: then would he not seek in vain in me, consolation and arguments to sooth his sorrows; for, can I ever forget that he once was my adored husband; the object dearest to my soul; that it is for the father of my  
child

child I each day implore the choicest blessings of Heaven?"

In every word and action, this fascinating woman had the magnetic art of persuading all who heard her, and Doringfield could not longer reprove the effusions of her grief.

By a fatality which every circumstance unfortunately conspired to give probability to, the odious projects of the Countess, to render two amiable beings eternally wretched, succeeded. The letter the miserable Lady Desmond had addressed to her Lord, did not reach Naples till some

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days

days after he had quitted it on his precipitate return home; and during his journey, he had given himself up to the delicious hope of soon clasping his wife and child to his fond and faithful breast. His father's anger at their clandestine union vanished before the delightful certainty of knowing she was his own, and that no power could dissolve their union. He wrote to his adored love from almost every town he passed, acquainting her he was on his return; but requested her continued silence on the subject of their marriage until he should surprise his family with his presence, and claim her as Marchioness of Desmond.

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The letters suppressed by the Countess, of course never reached her for whom they were alone intended. Neither were those Rosanna had sent more fortunate, but had without exception been committed to the flames by Mr. Bennett, who, too faithful to his employer, followed with cruel exactness those instructions, the odious plan of which was the final destruction of a brother's happiness. It was also by her order the paragraph in the Herald had been inserted, which was the death-blow to the Marchioness. For, knowing the papers were sent by his Grace to Wales, she had determined not a glimpse of hope should remain,



remain, to cheer by its bright rays the thorny paths of life.

The Marquis, owing to a sudden removal from Italy, had been spared the horrors he would otherwise have endured from the silence of his wife; and when he once again trod on English ground, he seemed to inhale the air which was impregnated with the sighs of his adored Rosanna. He with difficulty contained the excess of his emotions. It was nine o'clock when he landed at Dover. He would not be prevailed on by his less impatient companion to take either refreshment or repose; but, leaving his carriage and baggage to the care of his

his valet to be cleared from the packet, he immediately ordered a chaise and four to convey him on his road to town, where he thought it possible he might find the family.

On driving into the gates of Malvern-House, his heart palpitated with such violence, that for a moment he could scarcely breathe. The closed shutters announced, that the porter and house-keeper alone occupied the house; the loud knocks of his courier had at last roused the old porter from a comfortable nap in his leather chair; and not being accustomed to such thundering demands on his attention when the family

family were in the country, he started with surprise, and was preparing to growl out his disappointment, when the well-remembered voice of the Marquis drew him in a moment to the chaise-door.

The whole appearance, both of the residence and the servant, rendered the question, Is the Duke in town? perfectly unnecessary; and the harassed and now spiritless traveller entered the magnificent but comfortless abode, which owing to the close shutters, papered hangings, and rolled carpets, gave him but a cold reception.

“ Where

“Where are now the family?” cried the impatient Lord. “Where are my father and Miss Fortescue?”

“It is about three weeks since the Earl of Ormington and Lady Cecilia Neville went down to Bellevue, my Lord, where his Grace and the Countess had been ever since his Lordship went abroad: and Miss Fortescue, I hear from some of the servants, has been very ill, and they say is now in a decline,—but is at present in Wales with Mr. Doringfield and his wife.” “In what part of Wales?” cried his now frantic Lordship in a voice of thunder. “I beg pardon, my Lord,” said the porter, astonished at the unusual vehemence

hemence of the Marquis, who it did not strike him had added the graces of softness to his other travelled accomplishments, "but indeed I do not know. If your Lordship wishes to be informed, Mrs. Davis perhaps can tell you, my Lord."—"Then call her immediately."—"She will not return home till late, please your Lordship, having gone twenty miles out of town to visit a sick friend." "Damn her and her friend too! What business has she to be running about in this manner?"

The poor trembling porter, unknown what reply to make, now prepared to arrange the apartments  
more

more comfortably, and inquired if one of the women servants should get dinner. The half-famished tutor took upon himself to reply to this question, or it is more than probable he would have fared as he had done the preceding day, and gone without any food but that which he could gain from the feast of reason and the flow of soul :—poor living, it must be confessed, to any but a lover or an author, under neither of which descriptions his Lordship's travelling tutor could be classed.

His amiable pupil, nearly overcome at the information he had received respecting the state of his

Rosanna's

Rosanna's health, continued with hasty steps to traverse rooms peopled with a thousand delicious recollections, which in a degree calmed the agitation of his spirits; and after giving Mr. Bennett time to regale himself with mutton-chops, he ordered a chaise, in which he set off to the Castle; where he arrived under the auspices of that enchanter Hope, whose seducing chimeras, ever striving to make themselves heard, had almost persuaded him all he had heard was false, and that he should clasp in his paternal embrace a cherub child and its angel mother; when, on entering the Castle, he was at once disappointed.

His

His arrival was not altogether unexpected by the whole of its inmates, his sister having expected him by the letters of his governor : but she forbore to inform her father, as by so doing she must also have discovered the marriage which had prevented the full gratification of her hope ; and all the chance which now remained was, that the agony under which the Marchioness had lingered for some months, might deprive both herself and the much-dreaded child of existence : for the return of the Marquis convinced her, that no art could effect a separation between those who loved so tenderly.

The



The Duke heard the confession of his son's marriage with many expressions of anger ; but as there was nothing to which he could object in an union first planned by himself, but the secrecy with which it had been executed, he was soon reconciled to the event, and with pleasure saw his son depart for the residence of his friend and tutor, charging him to return with his lovely wife and her babe, as soon as she could undertake a journey to Bellevue.

The Countess, whose plans were yet undetected by his Lordship, hoped accident would alone be blamed for the loss of those letters  
which

which had occasioned such misery to her gentle sister : and she strove, by assumed gaiety, to drown the small shrill voice of conscience, which never ceased to repeat to her black soul, that she had an accomplice in her plans who, it was more than possible, might one day inform his Lordship of the diabolical arts she had recourse to, to tear him from her, whose gentle heart prized his affection beyond every other earthly blessing. Her days and nights passed in all the terrors of conscious sin, dreading each moment to receive the wages of iniquity ; and her only hope rested on the fidelity of one who, from having been the confident

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of her plans, had already convinced her, where he supposed his interest in question, he could be bribed to any party.

We will now leave the Marquis on his journey to Wales, and take a peep once more at the parsonage, where we left the interesting Rosanna in hourly expectation of producing a sweet blossom to the world. The agitation of her spirits had as was expected, hastened the time of her confinement; and after a few hours she received into her extended arms the infant girl who has already made a conspicuous figure in these pages.

With the birth of her child new ideas pressed on her mind; and the hope of once more beholding her Lord, of presenting him the infant cherub which then lay sleeping at her bosom, of again seeing him as he had ever been, the only bliss for which her heart panted, the delight of yet living again to constitute his felicity, brought on reflections so gentle, so consoling, that she nearly forgot her past misfortunes, to enjoy with more bright presages the happiness she once again had a presentiment would be within her grasp.

Led on by the false and deceitful twilight of hope, day had peeped

with its rosy face through the white curtains of her little room, while she was yet occupied with thinking of the father of her new-born darling, repassing in the store-house of her memory all that he had ever said, repeating to herself his words, and recollecting with a strength of precision known only to those who have loved as she did. A thousand times did this cherished voice vibrate to her heart, as with a mother's transports she kissed the soft cheek of the sleeping infant.

Mrs. Doringfield, who had watched by her for two nights, had now committed her to the care of her own  
maid,

maid, who had been one of the witnesses of her marriage with the Marquis. The nurse who attended her Ladyship, in the morning, softly stealing to her bed-side, was surprised to find her spirits so much better, owing to the pleasing reveries in which she had been indulging. She quietly seated herself near to the interesting mother, and was soon drawn by the Marchioness to talk on the only subject that for a moment occupied her thoughts.

Fanny, seeing her very existence depended on the hope of once more being united to his Lordship, conceived it would be some consolation

to indulge her with the delight of speaking of him ; and affectionately told her, that, after having repeatedly adopted and rejected a thousand plans to snatch her from the intolerable burthen of suspense, Mr. Doringfield was determined, at the risk of his Grace's favour, immediately to set out in pursuit of Lord Desmond, and to restore him to her : " For," added the soothing friend, " my husband is fully convinced some plan has been fabricated, which has unfortunately but too well succeeded in so unaccountably dividing those whose hearts are, we are yet firmly persuaded, so firmly attached to each other. Mr. Doringfield

ringfield has already tried the effect of letters, which, from having remained unanswered, we are almost sure have never been permitted to reach his Lordship."

"Dearest Fanny!" said the tender wife, delighted at the bare supposition that her Desmond might yet be blameless, and pressing her hand with ardour: "Is it then possible we may meet again, and he be permitted to receive from my arms this blessed babe? Ah, surely Heaven has marked out Doringfield and yourself as my guardian angels! But, should this plan turn out different from our hopes, will you, my



compassionate Fanny, if I am removed from a life of sorrow, promise to become the parent of my sleeping angel, and never resign her but to a father or a husband's arms ?”

Mrs. Doringfield regarded her with tenderest emotion while she considered the dreadful havock grief had made on her still lovely face ; where was plainly to be traced the gradual decay which had for months been gaining ground on her delicate frame ; nor did the hectic bloom of her sunk cheek, or the unusual brilliance of her languid eye, deceive by its appearance this amiable

able friend, whose foreboding heart whispered that the dissolution of its angel mother would shortly call on her to fulfil the charge she had so solemnly promised to undertake. Stooping over the bed, she kissed, with a sister's tenderness, the mother and sweet unconscious child; and looking in her face with the tenderest emotion, she replied, " Doubt not my care of the dear babe, should the misfortune you allude to ever take place; and may the Almighty prosper me and mine as I fulfil the promise made to you of guarding her as my own, till she is claimed by those superior powers, to whom

only it is your wish I should resign her !”

“ Thank you a thousand times, my kindest friend !” throwing her arms about her in a most tender manner. “ I now feel, at all events, in a state of comparative happiness ; in your voice are the tones of consolation, and to the will of Heaven I am now perfectly resigned—whether a slow and lingering death be decreed me, separated from the husband of my soul, or if in his mercy I may yet hope to be once more united to him, and in his arms resign my soul to God.”



She

She at this moment appeared calm and collected: an angel who would soon be robbed of all mortality, and be received into the bosom of her Maker, in that place where the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling.

The serenity which now spread itself on the face of the Marchioness might, in the eye of the common and cold observer, appear the offspring of resignation; but, to the sympathizing heart of her friends, and those who, having passed through the bitter school of affliction, cannot be deceived in the true secret of nature,—to such, it was easy to di-

stinguish that this state of apparent calm had its origin in an overpowering torrent which penetrated to the soul with the most afflicting sensations, and precipitated her into the abyss of sorrow, to which she yielded perhaps too supinely, without at first even making an effort to recover the vigour of her mind; which, like a jewel in the dark bosom of the earth, concealed its lustre from the world, and sunk her the prey of grief, a victim to the sharps of death.

It was now agreed that Mr. Doringfield should commence his journey in pursuit of the Marquis; a

step which, if not immediately taken, the visible change in the emaciated figure of his wife silently said would be useless.

The evening preceding the day of his departure was fixed on for the infant child to be baptized. The sweet mother had for the first time left her room: she was seated in a large chair, supported with pillows, the sleeping innocent on her knee; one of its soft hands pressed to the pale lips of its nearly angelic mother, who bent over it with looks of silent rapture, as fancy traced the loved features of its idolized father in this his miniature representative.

It was almost dark, towards the end of June ; and the candles not having been brought in, the windows of the little apartment were yet unclosed, from which Doringfield and his wife were contemplating a rising moon as it gradually rose over the summit of two high projecting rocks, whose towering head seemed to threaten destruction to that mortal who would venture to penetrate this asylum of mysterious nature, and which formed the boundaries of the little valley in which they resided.

“ Sure, Mr. Doringfield, I saw the figure of a man this moment pass the  
the

the window ; he appears to have gone round to the hall-door. Do, my love, see if it be any of our neighbours ; for the company of a stranger would be too much for the Marchioness."

Doringfield left the room, to follow the kind injunctions of his wife. The door of the apartment opened to that in which he expected to meet his visitor ; and, in a moment, that voice struck the ear of Rosanna which ever vibrated to her heart. " Where am I ? " cried she : " was it not the voice of my husband ? or can it be nothing more than a dream



dream of bliss,—a soft and dear illusion ?”

Mrs. Doringfield had also heard the voice, and flew towards the door, which was hastily burst open, and in a moment Lord Desmond clasped his wife and child to his fond, his constant heart.

“ Great God ! I thank thee for having granted my ardent prayer ! Once more I behold my husband ! my own, my adored Desmond ! and feel convinced that I am yet dear to him !” “ Rosanna ! my angelic wife !” repeated the frantic Marquis,

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on perceiving she had fainted in his arms. " Ah ! she is now indeed torn from me !" cried he, pressing to his faithful breast his unfortunate love, who pale, cold, and immoveable, was insensible to the tenderness of his caresses. He removed the large cap which covered her lovely face ; and, notwithstanding the ravages of grief and sickness, he once more contemplated that gentle countenance, those inexpressible charms, of which the remembrance was so deeply engraven on his heart. He beheld her altered form for some moments in calm despair ; then, giving way to all the impetuosity of his nature, he pressed his lovely wife  
to

to his heart, whispering the softest words which love could dictate; while pressing his mouth on the icy lips of his unfortunate Rosanna, he strove to reanimate her by the burning breath which exhaled from his bursting bosom.

She once more opened her eyes, and, taking the infant from the arms of Mrs. Doringfield, placed her in those of her father: then folding her own round the neck of a husband, and fixing on him a look of tenderness and joy, she faintly articulated some words expressive of her transport, at having him once more restored; when her head, like a flower

flower broken from its stalk, sunk on the bosom of her Lord. Some stifled words she again strove to express; but utterance was denied, and she breathed the last sigh he was fated to hear issue from those lips, which, even in death, seemed to possess the power of fascination. Her nerveless hands relinquished their hold, and she passed from a moment of felicity to a life of eternal happiness.

The kind friends who surrounded them remained in a state of silent misery, their eyes fixed on that gentle being, who, unable to support the full tide of unexpected bliss, had  
 flown

flown to the mansions of her God. The colour that still remained on her cheek would almost have led one to imagine that she only slept; but the penetrating Doringfield saw it was the last blush of animate circulation. The Marquis at first thought she had again fainted, and called on his departed saint by the fondest names phrensy could furnish; but the enchantment of his voice had not the power to revive the lamp of life, and conviction flushed on his mind of the dreadful circumstance.

Doringfield now approached the wretched Marquis, who still supported

ported in his arms the corpse of his wretched wife: the excessive paleness of his complexion made him suppose that he was already reunited to her in those regions, where nothing could again impede their felicity. But a slow pulsation discernible at his heart gave some slight hopes of lingering life. Previous to affording him any assistance, he endeavoured to separate him from the body of Rosanna, which he yet clasped in his arms: this with much difficulty was accomplished; and having removed it to the sofa, means were used to bring him back to life and bitter recollection.

Mrs. Doringfield, unable to bear  
such

such a scene of horror, had, with the sweet unconscious Alicia clasped to her maternal heart, quitted the chamber of death. On the first restoration of sense, Lord Desmond threw around him looks of uncertainty, as if he sought to retrace the remembrance of a frightful dream. Then fixing his haggard and wild eyes on the kind soother of his sorrows, he seemed to demand a confirmation of his fears.

“ She has ceased to suffer,” said the worthy man with an air of pious resignation, “ and is now reaping the advantage of eternal happiness. It is your duty, my dear Lord, to submit to the will of the Almighty, and support with a dignity

dignity of sorrow the character of a man." As he spoke, he took the icy hand of Desmond, to draw him from the chamber which contained the remains of the martyred angel. "O my beatified, my everlasting love!" cried the miserable husband, struggling to disengage himself from the hand of Doringfield, and casting himself by the precious remains of his Rosanna; "no power shall again tear thee from my arms." In his delirium, he continued to talk to her as if she yet lived; he supplicated her with groans and tears to answer him; then giving way to the uncontrolled impulse of his disturbed mind, with  
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the most frightful gestures he called down vengeance on his father, sister, and all who occasioned him to leave her.

“ In the name of your angel wife,” cried the terrified Doringfield, who feared instant madness, from the violence of his excessive sorrow, “ compose yourself! Ah, if that pure soul could now unite her voice with mine, with what ardour would she not supplicate you to make the offering of unavailing resentment on the altar of religion !”

“ Ah,” replied he, “ you loved her, and are yet ignorant of those  
accursed

accursed arts which have destroyed her. Bennett has unfolded to me all the plans of my diabolical sister, who shall find no mercy from me. I will acquaint you, when my distracted brain will permit, with a tissue of horrors, which has succeeded in dividing us. But you weep, my friend," added he in a softened voice: "it was you who first gave her to my arms, by the tenderest, the most binding of all titles, and your kind care, your tender consolations, gently soothed the cruelties of her unprotected state.

"O my heart's treasure!" he continued, "eternal object of the fondest,

est, the most ardent affections of my soul! was it to a fate like this you have submitted?" He clasped his hands, while drops of agony chased each other down his livid face. Doringfield now succeeded in drawing him from the room, and prevailed on him to retire to bed. The violence of his emotions, and the unceasing fatigue he had lately undergone, occasioned a most violent fever, which terminated to himself most happily; for, after a fortnight's illness, he rejoined the gentle spirit of his angel wife in the regions of everlasting bliss; and the lovely but unfortunate pair were at last consigned to the same tomb.

The

The extreme danger of the Marquis having been apprehended from the first, it was his own particular desire that the corpse of the Marchioness should not be moved from the house, till himself was carried lifeless from it. Before his decease he made a will, by which he nominated Doringfield as sole guardian of his infant child ; making it his particular request, that to avoid the possibility of her ever experiencing a similar fate with her unfortunate parents, Lady Ormington should be kept in total ignorance that a blossom yet remained from the blighted stock she had by art and ambition thus cruelly destroyed. Neither did he

with his father to be informed of the event, until his infant Alicia had attained the age of womanhood; too well knowing the unlimited power possessed by the unworthy Countess over the weakened faculties of his Grace, and dreading the possibility of her exerting it over the unfortunate little cherub.

Fifty thousand pounds, funded property, of her mother's, was bequeathed in trust for the infant heiress, who would at the decease of her grandfather become Baroness of Heartfield; while the estates of his Grace would undoubtedly devolve to the Countess. The  
 dukedom,

dukedom, owing to the unfortunate death of his Lordship, would become extinct on the decease of his father; an event which soon after took place without his ever having been informed that a child of his unhappy son had survived.

According to the orders of the Marquis, every proper step was taken to identify the person of Lady Alicia Neville; and it was then given out that the child had died shortly after its birth.

Mr. Doringfield was recalled by his Grace, about a month before his death, to take possession of the living

of Ashbourn, which had become vacant ; and, being in the presentation of his Grace, was by him conferred on the friend of his unhappy Desmond, whose fate he mourned with true paternal tenderness. As no reproaches could now restore his loved, lost friends, Doringfield thought it best to bury in his own bosom the injuries the Countess had heaped on her brother and his unfortunate Rosanna. At the same time he gave her Ladyship to understand, that Bennett, struck with remorse, had explained the true cause of his Lordship's mysterious silence, which had been the fatal occasion both of his own death and  
that

that of his lovely Marchioness. It was the certainty that Doringfield was fully acquainted with these crimes which made her regard him with that abhorrence, guilt and the knowledge of detection inspired ; though the respect this worthy man had ever entertained for his Grace, was a security for his silence on a subject, which now to publish to the world could have answered no good purpose, but must certainly have heaped both sorrow and disgrace on the heads of the Duke of Malvern and her husband, who was of that description of characters one might truly class under the denomination of a mighty good sort of man.



At the death of his Grace he bequeathed the whole of his property to his daughter and her son, who, ignorant of the birth of Lady Alicia Neville, assumed in her long list of honours the title of a Baroness in her own right ; and thus, for a time, beheld herself in possession of all those ambitious views, which in the attainment had cost her the sacrifice of every honourable and tender principle.

About a month prior to the Marchioness's death, the suit commenced by the husband of Lady Cecilia Fortescue, to recover the landed property of his relation, her late father,

ther,

ther, was by a decree of the Court of Chancery given in his favour; which circumstance was never known to the lovely and unhappy Rosanna, her kind friends fearing lest any additional uneasiness might hasten the approach of that grim tyrant, whom they long observed, with heart-rending sorrow, making hasty strides towards her.

The infant heiress was introduced at the parsonage of Ashbourn, as the orphan daughter of a near relation, and ever continued to be regarded with all the tenderness the fondest parents could evince to an only and beloved child. The death

of the Marquis and his adored wife, for some time occupied the attention of the neighbourhood; but as the melancholy event took place at a distance, it was merely named as a distressing circumstance, and soon after totally forgotten. As the transactions of Lady Ormington had never reached the knowledge of the public, and the marriage having been declared, the bodies of the ill-fated pair had been removed from Wales, and interred at Bellevue with all the pomp of funeral splendour. No suspicions of the real occasion of this melancholy catastrophe ever occurred; and the decease of his Lordship was attributed to sorrow for the

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the loss of his Lady, who it was reported had died in child-bed.

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When her beloved guardian disclosed to Alicia, now the declared Baroness of Heartfield, and acknowledged as such even by the haughty Countess, who, as the lovely daughter of the Marquis of Desmond, could no longer think her unworthy the hand of her son, tears and sobs choked her utterance as she listened to the fate of her suffering parents, whose griefs she feared were again revived in those she had suffered. Lady Cecilia with all the kindness of the tender-

est parent soothed her woes ; and her young and gentle friend participated in the afflictions of her fainted mother, and joined in execrating the deceitful heart of Lady Ormington.

Mr. Doringfield called at Bellevue in his way from London, and had confirmed the information Lady Cecilia had at his desire imparted, on that day when her lovely niece had made her first entrance in that house of which she was so bright an ornament. He had proved, past the possibility of dispute, the claims of Alicia to the honours her Ladyship was now forced to resign ; and also to the fortune of the late Marchioness,

chioness, which, owing to a long minority, had so greatly accumulated. Her Ladyship, covered with burning blushes of shame, acknowledged to Doringfield the part his wife had taken in the schemes raised to destroy the happiness of Henry and Alicia ; confessing that, when she first beheld that lovely girl, she had been greatly startled at the striking resemblance she bore her late brother ; and, with many expressions of remorse and sorrow, entreated the once hated but now highly flattered Doringfield to obtain for her the forgiveness of Lady Heartfield ; who she now fervently prayed

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might become Countess of Ormington.

Though the gentle nature of her lovely niece shrunk with horror at the bare mention of one who had so cruelly deprived her of the loved authors of her being, yet was her soft complying nature incapable of withholding the olive branch from the mother of him who, notwithstanding present unfavourable appearances, she yet hoped would be the beloved friend of her life, the guide and protector of her future days, and who, her heart told her, would find the crimes of his parent fit

fit heavy on his soul. Could she then, by refusing her forgiveness to his mother, inflict fresh sorrows on him she loved? The idea was insupportable; and her own repugnance to an interview gave place to the certainty that, were Lord Ormington by, it would be his first, his most ardent wish; and this determined her to put in practice that hardest duty religion commands, the forgiveness of our enemies; and one more bitter than Lady Ormington had been, human nature could not produce.

In the distresses of her parents, she found sufficient to teach her perfect



fect resignation to her own; and though many were the tears she shed for their sufferings, she yet felt an inward comfort from the knowledge she had gained of her real situation, and wept at full over their mutual afflictions.

The sensation of pleasure she might have felt at being restored to rank and splendour, was quickly subdued when she remembered that he, for whose sake she should alone have felt happy in the acquisition of consequence and fortune, was lost to her for ever. The injuries she had received from the Countess were not put in competition with the injuries  
of

of her parents ; a knowledge of which filled her soul with grief unalloyed by any selfish sentiments of revenge. It was this which made her dread an interview with the destroyer of their happiness ; nor could the recovered splendour of her situation restore ruined peace to her breast, or fill the gloomy vacuum which the lost Ormington had left : and with all the eagerness of the tenderest affection did she wish the time elapsed which would restore to her the society of her Henry.

How apt are we to wish those moments flown which interfere with what we consider as necessary to  
our

our felicity—little reflecting, as we ought to do, we can never enough estimate the blessing of that time we are so eager to have passed ! Neither do we mark it with sufficient thankfulness, as its swift steps flit by us. Even in affliction, how greatly are we its debtors ! It enables despair to gather fresh strength, and hope cannot be entirely excluded from the human breast. It is what wearied nature's sweet restorer is to the suffering body ; it renews the mind with fresh vigour, and enables us to support trying sorrows with resignation and firmness.

There is a fortitude in innocence  
which

which guilt can never attain. It was this which made the interview between the Countess and her amiable niece pass just as might have been expected, from triumphant innocence and the guilty fabricator of premeditated malice. Yet the truly generous Lady Heartfield forbore, either by look or word, to revert to the past transactions ; keeping constantly in sight, that it was the sister of her lamented parent, the mother of him in whom her own happiness centred, that in her presence was overwhelmed by the consciousness of detected crimes ; and yet her natural and ever dignified manners

were

were on this occasion marked by more than their ordinary attractions, as she gracefully received the compliments and congratulations of her aunt, on her restoration to the honours of her family.

The amiable inhabitants of Heathside were busily employed in making preparations for the marriage of Miss Fortescue, which, as some business of importance required the almost immediate return of Lord Rusborough to Ireland, it had been settled should take place with as much dispatch as the lawyers would permit; after which the bride and  
bride-

bridegroom were immediately to set off for his Lordship's seat in the neighbourhood of Waterford.

A most pressing invitation was given to Alicia, to accompany her amiable friend to that liberal and charming country, which those who have ever visited will acknowledge is the seat of kindness and hospitality; or they will have ill merited the distinguished attention and politeness which it is the characteristic of that generous nation to pay to all strangers, who, from the simple reason of being such, have a claim on their open and unsuspecting hearts, which is neither checked by the cold damps  
of

of suspicion, nor smothered by a want of reciprocal confidence.

But the invitation, though made by his Lordship with all the warmth of an Irishman, and seconded by his sweet Olivia as kindly, was, for many reasons, rejected; and when they remembered the distance, should the wandering lover be restored to his senses, and his country again be placed between them, she could not, judging by her own feelings, be surprised that her fair cousin refused to make one of the happy party who were to assemble at Castle-Strange, but contented herself with a promise that Lady Heartfield.

and

and her dear mother would visit them the ensuing summer ; at which time she trusted her run-away cousin would be restored to them.

The family of Lady Cecilia Fortescue now removed to Portman-square, preparatory to the wedding of her daughter; and, according to the arrangement made, that Alicia should continue to reside with her beloved friends, she made one of the party in the house of the amiable Fortescue ; to which his mother removed, having for some years resigned the London residence to her son.

It was the wish both of Doring-  
field



field and her Ladyship, that their lovely ward should be known in the world as the daughter of the Marquis of Desmond; and, to make this circumstance the more public, they thought Alicia should immediately be presented at the drawing-room. The Countess of Ormington, prior to their leaving Derbyshire, had offered to come to London for the purpose of introducing her lovely injured niece at St. James's. But this plan was rejected by Lady Heartfield with more than her usual firmness, who positively declared nothing should induce her to appear in the circles of the world until, by the restoration of her tranquillity in the  
return

return of Lord Ormington, she had a motive which would induce her to quit her present plan of retirement.

Mr. Fortescue had now constant opportunities of witnessing the thousand excellencies which marked the conduct of our heroine; and the uncomplaining sweetness with which she strove to support the separation from his happy rival, only served to augment his disinterested affection for the silent interesting sufferer. He gave up all his time to the friendly endeavour of contributing to her amusement. One morning that he was reading to her, a very eminent physician, who was on a footing

footing of intimacy with the family, had made them a call. The anxious Fortescue beheld with sorrow and surprise that he regarded the countenance of his fair cousin with apprehensive kindness, and requested permission to feel her pulse; which having been granted, he said, " Indeed, fair lady, you have much need of my assistance; and I give you warning, you will find me a daily visitor at this house till I see my prescriptions have removed all those symptoms I dislike about you."

Alicia sweetly thanked him, and promised to obey the injunctions he would have the goodness to favour

her with—while the hectic glow of her cheek was heightened, at having the visible languor which preyed on her constitution noticed by those friends, from whom it had been her most anxious wish to hide the grief which cankered at her heart.

Fortescue followed Dr. Montague when he quitted the drawing-room, and eagerly demanded what had occasioned such an alarm respecting the health of Lady Heartfield. “To confess the truth,” replied the friendly physician, “I much fear her Ladyship is rapidly advancing in a decline; which, if not immediately attended to, will, I dread, terminate

her life." "Impossible!" exclaimed the terrified Fortescue. "My dear Sir, you did not surely behold the beautiful glow of her cheeks; which, I trust, renders your fears without foundation."—"It is that very colour which most alarms me," replied his more skilful friend, who was familiarised with disease and death; "I am convinced some secret sorrow agitates her mind, and this, if possible, should be removed, or I much fear it will not be in the power of medicine to save this interesting young creature from the grave. However, no attention on my part shall be omitted, and we will yet hope for the best."

Fortescue

Fortescue for a moment remained silent ; then taking the hand of the friendly Doctor, he conjured him to use every endeavour to save a life so valuable to her friends ; telling him a plan had just struck him by which he trusted the uneasiness which preyed on the heart of his cousin might yet be removed ; an event which would do more in restoring her lost health, than the art of medicine could accomplish. They then separated ; and this disinterested young man repaired to the dressing-room of his mother, to whom he disclosed the apprehensions of Dr. Montague, and his own conjectures, that it was the unaccountable absence of Lord

Ormington which thus preyed on the mind of their beloved invalid; declaring his determination to set off immediately in pursuit of his head-strong relation, and represent to him the present situation of the uncomplaining victim of his rash impetuosity, who, he now for the first time acknowledged to his mother, was dearer to him than existence: but that, tenderly as he loved her, the certainty of having been accessory to the restoration of her peace, by having it in his power to give her back the envied object of her affections, was all the happiness he desired.

“ My

“ My noble, generous Charles!” exclaimed the exulting mother, “ how will you discover the retreat of Lord Ormington? You know the letters which have been already forwarded to him at the different bankers in the towns we have supposed it most likely he has passed through, we are informed by their correspondents, still lie at the places to which they have been directed; so that it is more than likely, Henry is yet ignorant of the change which has taken place in the situation of his cousin. . . . And how is it possible that you, without any clue by which to trace him, should be more successful than our other endeavours have



been to restore him to happiness? But go, my dearest son," she continued, tears of delight starting in her eye at a conduct so nobly disinterested: "never was a journey undertaken from more truly honourable motives; and I trust yours will be as fortunate as your generous heart wishes and expects."

"It has just occurred to me, my dear mother, that Henry is gone to Switzerland, to which country I have often heard him express a great degree of partiality; and it is probable he has retired to some seclusion in that neighbourhood, of which I know he is an enthusiastic admirer."

admirer. Those dispatches which have been forwarded to him have been, I think, addressed to Paris, Rome, and Naples; and I have yet flattering hopes of being the instrument of peace to the only woman who has yet made me feel I have a heart. This very evening I will put my design in execution."

Never was a journey undertaken or executed with more expedition. Lady Cecilia imparted to Alicia the generous design of her son; and the unbounded generosity and affection, so manifest in his proceedings, poured the balm of hope into her heart, and made the time pass in all

the pleasures of expectation. But the agitation of her spirits was more than her tender frame could support, and she appeared to her anxious friends in a most alarming state of health. Afs's milk was ordered, and a journey to the mild coast of Devon proposed; which was only retarded till some intelligence could reach them from their kind ambassador, who had reached Switzerland with all the expedition the delay of travelling would admit.

On his arrival at Geneva, Fortescue sought amongst the English resident at that charming place his unfortunate friend; and at length  
had

had the inexpressible delight of hearing, a gentleman who answered the description given had taken a small cottage on the borders of the Lake; and following the directions given, he immediately took the road pointed out.

Before he had reached the little paradise to which he had been directed, he saw a man reclining on the banks of the Lake, a dog watching by his side. On his nearer approach, the faithful spaniel flew towards his old acquaintance, and his loud expressions of joy at length roused the attention of his master,

M 5.

whose:

whose hand was now seized by his noble-minded cousin.

“Ormington, my dear friend!” cried he, “I have then at length been fortunate enough to discover you! And the sacrifice my heart has made to secure the peace of my friend, is crowned with success.”

The half-distracted Ormington was for some moments rendered incapable of utterance by the violence of his emotions, and his altered appearance too plainly evinced the agony of his heart: but at length he exclaimed, “Tell me, my dear Fortescue, what it is that has brought you

you to the undone Ormington, and of what nature is the sacrifice you advert to."

"Henry, I adore your innocent Alicia, who is reduced to the gates of death by the cruelty of your conduct; and to save a life so precious to all, I followed to restore to you the blessing your own precipitance has so nearly lost for ever." At these words, the agitated Earl would have disengaged himself from the hold of Fortescue, who, now that he had once discovered him, was determined never to let him a moment from his sight till all was fully explained.

Seeing he was yet madly incredulous to the tidings of his own returning peace, he continued in the most energetic manner to remonstrate—"What?" cried he, "must I overcome the passion which consumes me, and you, the happy mortal the honours with her invaluable affections, reject her? Ah, yet are you the victim of the blackest deception, which has nearly destroyed your amiable Alicia, the most innocent and exalted of her sex: and if you refuse instantly to return with me, you will have the horror of knowing yourself to be the murderer of the most angelic being which ever yet bore the stamp of mortality."

He

He then explained to the now delighted Earl, the whole particulars of the black calumny which had been so fortunately discovered, and assured him, in the name of his idolized cousin, a full pardon for his unjust suspicions. When composure was in some degree restored, they determined on immediately returning to that country which contained the sole treasure of Lord Ormington's heart, his still and ever adored Alicia ! deprived of whom, he was fast sinking into all the depths of the most profound melancholy. For to exist, deprived of the sweet object of his ardent passion,



son, it was plain from his altered countenance, could not long have been the case: and nearly as soon as the letter could have reached the family in Portman-square, the travellers had reached the door of Mr. Fortescue's house.

This kindest of all friends, with the consideration which marked his conduct in every circumstance where the happiness of Alicia was concerned, made him dread the effects of such an unexpected surprise, until some precautions had prepared the amiable girl for an interview so desired. He almost forced the impetuous

tuous Ormington into his study; there to wait the disclosure of his arrival being made known to Lady Heartfield.

It was with infinite delight the gentleman received the intelligence, that Doringfield was at that moment at dinner with the Ladies, (he having come to town some days before to perform the ceremony which united the lovely Olivia to her amiable lover,) and that Lord and Lady Rusborough had immediately after left town on their return to Ireland.

Fearful of alarming the little party by his unexpected arrival, Fortescue wrote

wrote a few lines to Mr. Doringfield, requesting his attendance in the library, without his mentioning to any body from whom his summons came. The moment he could disengage himself, he flew to the impatient friends: but on perceiving the grief-worn countenance of his beloved pupil, he started with surprise; his fine face was absorbed with a cloud of reproach, which the consciousness of his own conduct had inflicted; and he received the affectionate welcome of his friends with tears of repentance and contrition trickling over his pale cheeks.

When his speech was restored, he  
eagerly

eagerly inquired for his Alicia ; and the plaintive tones of his voice added to the interest Doringfield felt for his dear pupil ; and affectionately taking his hand, he cried, “ Our lovely friend is certainly in a very bad state of health ; but I trust the so ardently desired sight of your Lordship will yet restore her to our prayers.”

“ Oh ! my generous friend, how truly kind is this blest assurance, that I may yet hope for the pardon of my injured love ! And you, my kind Doringfield, by this unexpected goodness, are heaping coals of fire on my head, for having ever dared  
to

to harbour a surmise injurious to the purity of my adored Alicia, or the honour of my inestimable, my revered Doringfield. God will, I trust, in his mercy, pardon the sins of my mother; but I feel that at present I could not support the sight of one who had nearly destroyed us both, and the recollection of whose conduct makes me tremble at the thoughts of again beholding the only object which makes life desirable."

Fortescue now took measures to inform his mother of his return, and the fortunate termination of his search. This intelligence was received

ceived with the greatest satisfaction : but she yet trembled for the life of her beloved charge ; and, after having prevailed on her to lie down, her Ladyship hastened to join her nephew. She received the penitent lover with affection ; but did not hide from him the danger in which she thought his Alicia, whom her fears told her nothing but a miracle could save.

The distracted Ormington would instantly have flown to the apartment which contained his drooping love, but was warned by his more collected aunt. Such a proceeding would infallibly be the immediate death

death of Lady Heartfield, who was rendered too weak by illness to support so sudden a transition from despair to unlooked-for happiness. But the kind-hearted Lady Cecilia, seeing the effect this intelligence had on the countenance of his Lordship, promised, if he thought he could contain his emotions, she would indulge him with a sight of her fair patient unobserved by her, who was then reclining on a sofa in the drawing-room.

The impatient Henry, having promised all that was asked of him, was placed in an outer apartment, which opened with folding glass doors to the

the one wherein he beheld the lovely object of all his thoughts. One white hand supported her head, while the other was carelessly thrown on the table before her in a state of listless inaction.

Lady Cecilia and Doringfield entered together. The former took her work-box, from which she drew some netting; but her manner was so agitated and unquiet as not to escape the notice of Lady Heartfield, who sweetly said, taking her hand as she spoke, "Tell me, my dear madam, what it is that has occurred to occasion these unpleasing sensations which I at this moment behold disturb you; and



and do not fear my fortitude in any trial I may yet have to undergo."

"No, my love, I am not uneasy; it is pleasure that now oppresses me; and the fear that you will be unable to support with your accustomed calmness the transition from sorrow to delight, this is the occasion of my want of firmness on the present delightful occasion. Alicia, our Ormington is restored to us, and eager to fold you to his faithful bosom: will you refuse pardon to the penitent and yet loved Ormington?"

Alicia was now unable to reply; her boasted composure had fled, and she

He fainted in the arms of Lady Cecilia as she softly whispered, "Oh! let me once more behold my Henry!" Her silver voice just penetrated to his ear: he was irresolute whether to enter or not; but hope at length prevailed over timidity, and he was once more in the presence of his injured love, and received into his extended arms the fragile object of his adoration.

In his warm embrace, the faded rose again returned to its banished station, the sparkling ray of pleasure adorned her features, and the rich suffusion of love and joy animated her countenance as her sweet eyes  
opened

opened on the well-remembered countenance of Lord Ormington. "Forgive, my adored love!" he cried, "the presumption of a man who can no longer exist without beholding you! Ah, say, can those sentiments with which I once was honoured be effaced? Is there then no pleader in a heart which was acknowledged mine by every tie of sympathy, to intercede for my headstrong folly? Hear me, thou soul of all my hopes and wishes, and pardon the madness of a lover urged by the phrensy of the moment; for never will I again profane thy angel purity by doubt! Oh, pity and forgive a wretch who should have known you  
incapable

incapable of perfidy; restore me by one gracious smile, one blest assurance of the delightful certainty, that, in spite of my folly, I yet am dear to her who reigns triumphant in my faithful breast !”

Lady Heartfield now raised her blushing face from his arm, on which she yet reclined ; and, looking on him, a smile of ineffable sweetness arrayed her countenance, a beam of delight brightened her tearful eye ; and, extending her lovely hand, she took one of his with an inexpressible grace, which diminished not that modest dignity inseparable from all her actions ; and pressing it with tenderness

to her heart, she cried, "Receive once more, most amiable, most beloved of men, the faithful vows of your own Alicia ; they are yours by merit and by right : I disclaim all deceit and affectation, and confess it is not in my power to dispossess my beloved cousin of the heart which is so unalienably his own for ever."

"Thou art once more my wife, my idolized Alicia ! Oh, happiest moment of relenting fate ! propitious sounds of promised bliss breathed from thy generous, all-persuasive lips !"

After some moments passed in rapture,

ture, the grateful Lady Heartfield expressed the obligations so forcibly felt for the inexpressible kindness of Fortescue. Her eyes sparkling with animated pleasure, she said, " Those sentiments which occasioned the alteration in my health, no longer exist ; and, with the blessing of Heaven, I now trust I shall yet live to recompense my kind, my tender friends, for their excessive indulgence to their till now heart-broken Alicia."

The unrepublishing Lady Heartfield had, by her uncomplaining sweetness, excited more remorse in the breast of her lover than any com-

plaints could have done. She perceived this effect, and strove by unusual exertions to banish the reflection of her illness from his mind, and restore him to his usual spirits. "My dear Lord," she said, seeing that her kind exertions had as yet failed to enliven him, "why is it you do not appear to share in the joy your return has occasioned? Indeed, I am almost tempted," added she, sweetly smiling, "to be jealous of myself, and to believe I was more agreeable to you when we last met by moonlight than I am at present. Tell me truly, my dear cousin, have I a Swiss rival?" In a moment she reflected this little folly might carry the

the

the appearance of reproach ; and she softly added, “ But your presence, and the care of our kind aunt, will soon restore whatever good looks I might at that time possess, as I have again a motive for wishing to appear in your eyes as attractive as ever.”

The Earl felt all the generosity of her behaviour ; and, overwhelmed with the nobleness of that conduct which so truly marked the delicate and tender affection she yet cherished for him, could only press her to his heart in silent admiration, as the recollection of that evening on which they last had parted brought back all the subsequent hours of misery he



had undergone. The delights of hope made the happy party perceive that love would bring about a restoration to health and happiness, which the art of medicine could not effect. For that evening, the flambeau of life appeared again rekindled; and promised to light them on to future felicity. Joy shone in the eyes of Lady Heartfield as they rested on all most dear to her, now collected round the cheerful fireside of Lady Cecilia; and even Fortescue forgot his own disappointment, while contemplating the felicity of his tenderly beloved friends.

Alicia, ever anxious to fulfil each duty allotted to her, hinted to Lord Ormington

Ormington it would be proper he should see his mother, who was now as anxious for their union taking place, as the idea had once been displeasing to her. " Yes, my love, I will, at your request, see her ; but," continued he, fixing his eyes tenderly on her, " when the interview is to take place depends upon my Alicia ; for never till the moment which gives me a right to the title of your husband will I behold that parent who, from motives so disgraceful to herself, would for ever have destroyed the happiness of her son, and sacrificed to her unceasing ambition the gentle object of his tenderness ; who, had she been portionless and un-

known, would at this moment have continued the victim of calumny and deception. It is only my angel wife who can restore an injured son to the mother who would so cruelly have wronged him."

His Lordship had too many advocates in the house of his aunt to make him dread a refusal of his request; and the breast of his lovely cousin not being callous to the entreaties of the object of her acknowledged tenderness, before they parted for the night, the next day but one had been named for a ceremony which would unite them for ever.

At

At the appointed hour, the marriage took place in the drawing-room at Fortescue's house, who acted as father on the occasion. Lady Cecilia and the now transcendently happy Doringfield with tears of rapture congratulated the amiable pair, and uttered a silent prayer to the Almighty that their happiness may be as uninterrupted as their virtues were conspicuous. The idolizing husband could not be prevailed on to leave his Alicia even for a few days; and a letter was substituted to the Dowager Countess instead of the visit from her son, as his fair bride was not yet sufficiently recovered for journey to Bellevue: but Doring-

N. 5,                      field,

field, who was under the necessity of returning home, was the first who announced the arrival of his Lordship in England ; and also conveyed to the castle the information of the now so ardently desired marriage having taken place.

Her Ladyship, immediately on receiving the welcome intelligence, set off for London, to express in person her joy on the occasion. The little Lydia was made the companion of her journey, who was transported at the idea of once more seeing her first and ever tenderly beloved protectress : nor did the amiable Countess receive her former favourite with less affection

affection for having been the innocent cause of all her sorrows, but through life evinced towards her the tenderness of the most affectionate parent.

The health of Alicia being now nearly restored, by the blessing of a mind at ease, and not a wish ungratified, she recovered her former loveliness, and consented to the wishes of her friends, who were eager she should be presented to a world in which she was formed to shine. Some circumstances of her having been brought up in obscurity had transpired, and of course the public curiosity had been in some degree excited; but, owing to the reconciliation

N. 6.

liation between Lord Ormington and his mother, nothing which could in the smallest degree cast a reflection on her Ladyship's character had gained credit; and very splendid preparations were making for the bride's appearance at St. James's, where she was to be introduced by the Dowager Countess. But, as her constitution was still too delicate to bear the fatigues of London dissipation, she requested her Lord to indulge her by going immediately after the ceremony of their presentation to Bellevue castle, which Lady Ormington had resigned to her son, and where for some months they promised themselves the felicity of the uninter-

uninterrupted society of each other, their beloved Lady Cecilia, and revered Doringfield; who, blessed in the happiness of his Alicia and her Lord, forgot his own mortification in having such a wife as that unworthy woman who bore his name; and who, overwhelmed with mortification, had on quitting the parsonage sought an asylum in the house of Sir Granby Darcy, whose Lady had for some time been the subject of much conversation, as her conduct, and that of a young nobleman who was the great friend of her husband, had given more reason than is always the case for the *good-natured* strictures of the world. But as the intimacy



intimacy subsisting between Lady Darcy and Lord William Monteville was sanctioned by the husband, who still continued to drive his Lordship through the parks in his curricle, and lounge on his arm up and down Bond-street, the remarks are as yet confined to the whispers of their *friends*, and innuendos in the morning papers; which would equally have suited half a dozen other fashionable husbands as Sir Granby Darcy, who for some time longer was the dupe to the fascinating arts of his unworthy wife. But the veil in the course of a few months was torn from the eyes of the dishonoured husband, and a divorce  
 consigned.

consigned her Ladyship to disgrace and obscurity.

The following letter from Lady Ormington will speak the sentiments of gratitude and affection with which her amiable heart continued to regard that worthy and excellent man, who had so uniformly treated her with the tenderness of the most anxious parent, and whom, during life, she never ceased to regard with the duty and reverence of a daughter.

“The Countess of Ormington to the  
Rev. John Doringfield.

Grosvenor-square, June the 2d.

“Another week, (said I) and we  
are

are on our road to Bellevue ; but when this flattering hope escaped my heart, I flew to my Henry, and it took the form of *certainty*. Alas ! how little had I profited by the philosophic lessons of wisdom and experience, those sweet instructions in which the kindest of all guardians has taught me, that the past only is certain, the present precarious, and the future altogether unknown ! Yes, every one of these lessons must have been forgot, when, in the presumption of my elated imagination, I dared to tell my beloved Mr. Doringfield that I should be so very soon restored to his society. The blessing is not

not put off, it is only deferred; but even this delay is more than the patience of your Alicia can very gracefully support. I knew nothing of it last night; it was only this morning, as we were at breakfast, that my Ormington informed me, business would detain him a fortnight longer in town; nor can I murmur at any circumstance which does not deprive me of the society of him, in whose presence alone I exist; and have I not vowed obedience at the very moment when I exchanged a state of comfort for one of exquisite felicity?

“ Ah, gracious Providence, when  
I think

I think of his unbounded love, his unbounded generosity, every vow that I have made to him is a gem added to my treasure of happiness, the preservation of which will ever be dearer to me in proportion to the rich estimation in which I hold them.

"How delightfully do we now spend our time! for, not having yet appeared at St. James's, we are shut out from every body but our nearest connections. I wonder people can be so distracted after the world, when I find so much more satisfaction in being excluded from it. My appearance on the birth-day, I am told  
by

by my mother-in-law, is to be splendid beyond all example ; but I do not know in what my splendour is to consist. Lady Cecilia and her Ladyship have taken it on themselves. I feel it will be a terrible penance ; but there is no method of avoiding it, or how gladly should I make my escape ! Surely it is an awful thing to be stared out of countenance, whether it be to approve or condemn.

“My dear Lord is just returned from the levee. If I do not go to him this moment, I shall hear myself called on, and perhaps be chidden for lingering. How flattering,  
how

how sweet are such chidings when love assumes the language of anger to make itself more fully comprehended by his happy wife!"

Lady Cecilia Fortescue writes,

"Allow me, my dear Alicia, to inform our worthy and revered friend he has only been dreaming of happiness, while I have been feasted on the reality, in beholding the triumph of righteous honour over unrighteous stratagem ; of angel innocence over infernal guilt : it was the triumph of our meek Alicia over the foes of her virtues. My eyes are still sparkling from the joy with  
which

which I partook of the mortification of that little insignificant Lady Darcy, who is, if I am not much mistaken, together *with others* who must *now be nameless*, keeping Lent after their Carnival. I shall expect that you, my good friend, would be dissatisfied with the *tout ensemble*. I shall therefore, without descending to the minutiae of things, hold up for your inspection the most striking features of an admirable picture representing modern times and modern manners. All that I know about the Countess's dress (for I scarcely looked at any thing but her soul-beaming countenance) was, that the diamonds, which might be said nearly  
to



to cover every part of it, had an excellent envy-creating effect on others, though it produced no symptoms of vanity in the wearer. Ormington's eyes were fixed on her face: I cannot tell you with what rapture he gazed on her: and he met me at the door of the dressing-room, as I went to Grosvenor-square early, on purpose to be the first of the assembled family who were to proceed to Saint James's. Drawing me into the room by both my hands—"Come here, my dear aunt," said he, "look at my Alicia, and tell me, did you ever behold such an angel as nature and my mother have made of her?"—"An angel, indeed!" cried I, struck with

with as much surprise as if this had been the first time I had ever beheld her lovely form, "and it is well there are not many such, or I fear they would be sadly worried by those of their own sex, who are in the run of nature's common productions." "For my part," said the delighted husband, "I hardly know how to support my uncommon good fortune. Oh! Lady Cecilia, teach, instruct me how to merit my transcendent happiness."

"These transports were more gratifying to his lovely wife, than all the fine things which were addressed to her in the whole course of her exhibition,

hibition, or there is no intelligence in eyes, neither is the language of a smile to be translated. "Take off your glove, my love, that we may see how your hand will agree with the rest of your appearance." She did as desired. "It will do very well," added his Lordship. "The Queen has a white hand, and I should hate to see it contrasted by that belonging to my wife." "But you forget, my dear Lord," said I, "our Alicia is not to kiss hands, but is intitled to the royal salute on her cheek."

"The Dowager here made her entrance, and the bride was handed to her superb chair through a crowd of persons

persons whom the servants had assembled in the hall to get a glimpse at their lovely Lady, who with the greatest kindness stood some moments to gratify a curiosity so highly raised. When we reached the Royal drawing-room, Lady Ormington was a good deal frightened ; but we were so early that the circle was not crowded, and we found ourselves placed more commodiously than it is generally one's fate to be on a birth-day.

“ I did not look so much at Alicia whilst the Countess presented her, as at the faces of those who surrounded them. It is on the countenance

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that I expect to see the effects of the passions; for, if the soul cannot throw itself all into the face, yet there is no small part of it to be seen there; all sorts of uncharitableness were speaking visibly in the screwed-up features of the Countess of Gifford; their natural acidity a good deal more acid than common; nor were the faces of Lady Georgina Crawford and her sisters less intelligible in the silent expressions of envy, hatred, and malice. Sounds are uncertain, but the language of the face is fixed. Dignity, sense, kindness, and sensibility, were the holiday clothes in which nature decked the countenance of Alicia. Art spread  
her

her meretricious garb over the features of her own fair pupils. Nothing is sweeter than nature, nothing more nauseous than affectation.

“ The strictures I have been making, are my own private observations; had I been a less curious spectator, listened only to the fine speeches, seen only the skin-deep smiles that were lavished on the lovely Countess, I might have been led into the strange error, of supposing her beauty and merit had made friends of all. I should think this kind of concealed emotion must be borne with as much trouble, as a tight shoe on the foot of a gouty person.

“ Lady Darcy was not amongst the last to pay her compliments to Lady Ormington, who received her advances with cold civility. The bride was received with particular attention by their Majesties; I was not in hearing of what was said by them of the lovely Alicia. It was a blush of delight; the Countess looked pleased; and many who were not equally charmed with the spectacle very much otherwise.

“ I collected all these wise observations at a transient glance, my stock of attention being differently engaged by a conversation between two ladies who stood behind me,

5 that

that I could miss nothing of what they were saying. "Who is that beautiful woman so covered with diamonds?" "Oh, she is one of your lucky adventureesses," replied the other. "You know her then." "Know her!" retorted the other, "why every body who is able to read a newspaper, must have heard of Miss Arundale. I heard her whole history from Lady Darcy, last night at the opera. She was brought up by some country parson, and all of a sudden came out as a grand-daughter of the Duke of Malvern and a Peereess in her own right, and is now the bride of the



Earl of Ormington, her cousin ; that fine young man who stands at her right hand."

" Just as my communicative neighbours came to this part of Alicia's history, I looked about, and saw the Countess and her daughter on the move. We now left the drawing-room; and when we returned at night, the lovely Countess exhibited her charming person in a minuet. But what business have I to tell you she was charming? Your heart must have told you this without any interference of mine; and the only excuse I can find for the  
imperti-

impertinent repetition is, that I saw and heard it so often expressed last night, that, like a parrot, I caught the word, and it is no wonder if I let it slide from my pen mechanically.

“ I shall very soon write to you again, but sufficient to the day is our good or evil fortune. It is yours to lament, that I have made so much use of my pen, and taken up the paper which would otherwise have been filled by your Alicia. It is mine to rejoice when I trace out the characters of that reverence and affection with which I have ever been the most devoted of your friends.

“ C. F.”

The

The Countess of Ormington  
writes,

“ My kind aunt has, I find, gone over the subject of the birth-day, so that I need not trouble you with any more of it, unless I could think of any thing fine and brilliant which never had been said before on a court circle. Under this self-imposed restriction, the only remark I am inclined to make, is certainly far less brilliant than novel; for when I seek gratification of any sort, it must not be in a multitude. The mother of my Lord would call this the decision of a mean rustic; but her Ladyship will never see what I am  
writing;

writing; and as to the majority of the great world, I shall not disturb myself, should I incur a portion of their disapprobation.

“ We have been crowded with visitors since our appearance at the drawing-room. All the world seems to have been let in. I am not quite so much the mistress of my own time as I used to be, or I would not defer giving you a descriptive list of many amiable people hitherto unknown. But these I must keep in the back ground of my memory, and present them when I am once more seated in our little drawing-room, at the dear parsonage of Ashbourn—

But

But not even there till my revered parent, my beloved guardian, is tired of looking with partial fondness on his now happy, ah, *now exquisitely happy,*

ALICIA ORMINGTON."



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